

WHEN THE PATIENT IS A WORK OF ART

BY HENRY F. SMITH

Almost a decade ago, I was invited to a large dinner celebrating the future of psychoanalysis in the new millennium. It was held in the faculty club of a small East Coast university. In between courses, a waiter approached and asked if he could speak to me. I was grateful for a respite from shop talk with colleagues, most of which was anything but celebratory.

A man in his sixties, he looked as if he might have waited on tables there most of his life. "I've always admired psychoanalysis," he said. "But there's just one thing."

"What's that?" I asked, surprised to be having this particular conversation.

"The name," he said. "*Psychoanalysis*. It assumes too much." And he walked away as abruptly as he had arrived, leaving his profundity hanging in the air.

While his millennial comment was a judgment on our field as a whole—a correct one, in my view—never have our assumptions been more apparent in their grandiosity than when we have turned our attention to the arts. And if the name *psychoanalysis* is a problem, what about *applied psychoanalysis*? Historically and without embarrassment, we have practiced precisely what the phrase says: the "application" of psychoanalytic theory to works of art and to the culture at large. Could we ever be more justifiably accused of assuming too much?

In assessing an article on applied analysis, an editor—or at least this editor—feels himself to have something of an unwritten covenant or fiduciary relationship with the object of study. A work of literature, a painting, or a piece of music—not to mention its deceased author, artist, or composer—has no power to protest (or

resist) an analyst's often well-intentioned interpretations, as his or her patients inevitably do. Hence our protectiveness toward the voiceless, not to say lifeless subject. Under these circumstances, we may hold analytic authors to an even higher standard of evidentiary criteria than we do when their patients can talk back.

Some of this follows a historical trend. As I have indicated, in the psychoanalytic "age of certainty" (Smith 2008), there was a tendency to apply psychoanalytic theory to a work of art as if we held the key not only to the meaning of the work, but also to its creator's character—without, of course, having ever laid eyes on him or her. As a result, there were many heavy-handed psychoanalytic interpretations, indiscriminately applied—like pressure on the forehead—that drained the life out of the art, encasing it in familiar jargon.

Although we still see applied papers of this sort, it strikes us today as frankly wrong. Instead, we ask for a careful examination of the details of a work, or of an artist's life, just as we look for the careful examination of analytic process that exemplifies contemporary analysis at its best. Sometimes we encourage applied papers to assume the same stance toward the study of the "microprocess" of a work of art—its here-and-now effect, if you like—that we see in much contemporary clinical work.

Actually, psychoanalysis came late to this approach, in both the clinical and applied situations. It was introduced in the arts long before its arrival on the analytic scene. In the 1950s and 1960s, as a corrective to wild analysis in the field of literature, for example, it was called *close textual analysis*. The aim was to elucidate a piece of literature, a poem or novel, from within the structure of the work itself—that is, through a detailed study of the text rather than through the imposition of a critic's theories or personal responses.

This form of scholarship does not suit all applied papers, but neither is it limited to works of literature or folklore, such as Rosegrant's brief but trenchant study of "Rumpelstiltskin" in this issue of *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*. It turns out that one can present detailed evidence from within a work of art even if the work in question is a painting, as we see in Hartman's examination of a painting

by Dalí; or a film, as in Yanof's essay on Almodóvar's *Talk to Her*; or a piece of music, as in the three musical exegeses in this issue: one by Mollod on Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, a second by Nagel on Verdi's *Otello*, and a third by Muller on Mahler's Eighth Symphony.

Also represented in this issue, overlapping in some cases with the articles already cited, are studies of creative individuals: Wilson's of Giacometti, Mollod's of Berlioz, and Shengold's exploration of competition and posture with special reference to the work and person of Nabokov. I can only add that Shengold's inimitable essay is in a class by itself, one that defies categorization, an interdisciplinary genre of his own endlessly creative invention.

These papers enrich our appreciation of the artist, his or her work, and of the creative process, but they also—in certain instances, primarily—use the object of their study to illuminate, explore, and extend our understanding of our own field, its theory and practice, thus illustrating once again that the arts have as much, if not more, to teach us as we do them.

All the articles in this issue were submitted through the usual channels and, by good fortune, at about the same time; they were then peer reviewed, revised, and accepted for publication. I have grouped them together because I believe they illustrate the range of contemporary applied psychoanalysis at its best. I am grateful to their authors for their unusually thoughtful studies and for their forbearance as we have prevailed upon them not to “assume too much” and tried to uphold our covenant with the subjects under their care.

REFERENCE

SMITH, H. F. (2008). The age of certainty. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 77:1-19.

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COMPETITION AND POSTURAL CONFRONTATION IN LIFE, SPORTS, AND PSYCHOANALYTIC TREATMENT —ILLUSTRATED CLINICALLY AND IN RELATION TO VLADIMIR NABOKOV

BY LEONARD SHENGOLD

The importance of the emotions that can be evoked by (face-to-face and face-to-back) postural and visual contrapositions in life and in psychoanalysis—and specifically in relation to sports and games—is delineated and illustrated in clinical and literary material. The latter features aspects of the life and works of the writer Vladimir Nabokov.

The chess board is the world; the pieces are the phenomena of the universe; the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature.

—Thomas H. Huxley (in *Lay Sermons, Addresses and Reviews*, 1870, quoted in *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 1953, p. 266)

INTRODUCTION

The newborn baby starts out in a predominantly supine position, face to face with the mother when at her breast and when being held and cleaned. The infant later can also sit on her lap, its back to her front. When able to stand up and walk, the child can assume a face-

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to-knee confrontation. With further growth, this vis-à-vis becomes a face-to-genitals and then a face-to-belly position when confronting the parent. The growing child remains at a lower position (and has much less strength) than the mother or father until after puberty. The early child's back-to-front position in relation to the parent evolves so that the youngster can turn away from, and then crawl and walk away from, the mothering figure—essential developmental steps (literal and metaphorical) toward individuation, achieved at the price of anxiety about separation and loss.

The patient in analysis lies supine, below and in front of the seated analyst located behind. The patient's front is presented and can be observed by the analyst, but the patient cannot ordinarily see him. It is not a vis-à-vis confrontation—except at the beginning or (sometimes) the end of the session. On the couch, the patient is "one down"—in a lower and, psychologically, a regressed childlike position of comparative helplessness.

Psychoanalysis, Freud tells us, is one of the impossible professions—still, it is much easier and psychologically safer to be an analyst than to be a patient.

SPORTS, AGGRESSION, DOMINANCE, AND REVOLUTION

It has been said that the rulers' and the ruling classes' policy of fostering their plebeian subjects' viewing of and participation in sports has, throughout history, been one of the main ways of controlling the masses and avoiding revolutions. Passions involved in sports have resulted in a diversion away from rebellious and potentially violent, hostile passions directed against authorities. The same sublimatory tendency exists in and derives from a similar displacement of hostility away from parental authorities and onto opponents in games. Murderous as well as sexual impulses are discharged in sublimation by the spectator of and the participant in both group and individual confrontational, competitive sports, whether or not these involve physical contact. (Murderous hostility without sublimation is, of course, aimed at foreigners in war, as

well as countrymen in revolutions; these involve dehumanization of the enemy.) Interest in sports burgeons in adolescence, when the youth's physical and sexual powers begin to rival and then usually outdo those of the parents.

This diversion from revolution was famously rampant in ancient Rome. The plebian masses were drawn to the arena to see the deadly confrontations of gladiator facing gladiator, or Christians or barbarians facing lions—the circus part of “bread and circuses” transformed by murder.¹

Of course, the hostility has not always been successfully directed away. Many rebellions and civil wars were begun by ill-used underlings (e.g., Spartacus's failed rebellion in first-century-B.C. Rome), as were many violent, sometimes successful revolutions (e.g., the seventeenth-century regicidal English, the eighteenth-century guillotine-obsessed French, and the twentieth-century bloody Bolshevik revolutions). Historically, encouragement by the domestic authorities—kings, aristocrats, governmental officials—of sports, in order to help turn subjects and slaves aside from destructive wishes and actions toward masters, has always existed alongside the even more effective seeking out of war against alien enemies. Aliens and barbarians are (in consciousness) neither family nor countrymen, but they can, of course, represent them in negation. Aliens can easily be demonized and stripped of their individual human qualities. In our own time, much discharge of aggression also takes place in watching violent and terror-themed, “monster” movies, television programs, and video games.

PRIMAL SCENE IMPACT

There is an unconscious revival of aggressive primal scene experiences or fantasies within the minds of spectators and devotees—and

¹ My first name, Leonard (derived from lion), has made for frequent connotations of the creeping in or pouncing of lions in many of my patients' associations. This tendency has been reinforced by the presence in my office of a fire screen featuring the embroidered head of a lion, visible as the patient approaches the couch. This makes me especially alert to arena references, as well as to those involving the biblical character Daniel.

especially in those of fanatically committed fans—of sports involving opponents.² Feared, dangerous, and even deadly—but also wished-for, exciting, and even *overstimulating*—front-to-front or front-to-back (e.g., Freud’s Wolf Man) parental sexual configurations are evoked in fantasy. Parental couplings are generally felt by the young child to be sadomasochistic and destructive. The passive little observer (or would-be observer) is terrified of the prospect of losing one or both parents in the mysterious, dangerous struggle between them, but also wants to take part in the arousing, tumultuous actions of “the beast with two backs.” The experience of feeling left out and abandoned supplements the child’s (developmentally inevitable) terror that his own intense, aggressive, rage-filled feelings and wishes will magically kill the parents.

PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS AS VIEWED IN PSYCHOANALYSIS, CHESS, AND TENNIS: CLINICAL MATERIAL OF PATIENT X

I have been impressed by the connotations of one-to-one confrontational sports—specifically, in relation to chess and tennis—that come up in the associations of patients in psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic therapy. (Boxing, wrestling, and fencing would be similarly evocative, but I am not here including clinical material in relation to them.)

Patient X was a man in his early forties whom I saw early in my career, when I was a relatively inexperienced candidate-analyst. I was a good deal younger than X and found it reassuring that he so easily and intensely cast me in the role of father.

² I remember from my distant residency years a very intelligent, black orderly who liked to talk about baseball with (mostly, *to*) me. We talked about other things enough for me to know that he felt bitter about his lesser hospital status, yet he was polite and characteristically subservient to the mainly white doctors (the aristocracy). Once, while he and I were busily working well together in the Emergency Room to help a badly traumatized black man who had been hit by a vehicle driven by a white man, he suddenly turned to me with his face lit up with ecstatic passion, and exclaimed, “Dr. Shengold, I just *love* the Yankees!”

X had a fine reputation in his field, and had obvious talents and inclinations that contributed to his doing good for others—working toward the profit of his employees and his clients. This consistency at work was contradicted and sometimes undone by his unsure and often unwise management of his own financial operations. He reported a pattern of amassing money and then suddenly losing it. He was aware that if he failed badly, his employees and clients could also be endangered. X had a compulsion to lose, to be punished, but he had always been clever and resourceful enough to rebound and rebuild. He felt tired of these repetitions, but did not know how to stop them.

He also seemed to be a loser in his romantic and sexual life. X was a bachelor and a competent womanizer. He was good-looking and possessed charm and keen intelligence, and had a gift for scathing and sometimes self-deprecatory wit. Women were attracted to him, and he usually had an easy time finding a sexual partner, but, subsequent to his conquest, was unable to care much about the woman with whom he had had sex. He was especially compelled, he told me bitterly, to retreat from any relationship with a woman who seemed to be caring and loving. If he did begin to care for a woman, he could not maintain the felicity he consciously wanted; here he was following his pattern in relation to financial success.

X appeared to have a Madonna/whore conflict and, despite appearances, a predominant penchant for masochism in a sadomasochistic mixture. He was able, later in the treatment, to allow himself to realize how deeply he desired to love and be loved, and how anxious and vulnerable this made him. He had anal sexual fantasies, ostensibly about women, and a tendency toward autoerotic anal play accompanying masturbation. The anal play made for great shame, and his revelation of it came late in the analysis. This appeared in the transference accompanied by great rage and anxiety. He once said to me, his voice shaking with passion, “I want you to fuck me, but if you dared to touch me, I’d kill you.”

Confrontations and Facings-Away

I quickly noticed that X had considerable troubles both when coming through the door, heading toward me and the couch, and when getting up and presenting his backside as he left. He characteristically arrived a few minutes late, and tried to postpone the end of the hour by dawdling before getting up off the couch and walking away. He initially would leave the door to the waiting room open.

I felt this behavior had to do with a need to keep control of the time, as well as being a manifestation of difficulties with contact and separation. My early attempts to make some connections among these behavior patterns were essentially ignored by him. It was only after many months that X began to pay some attention to what he was doing with his body in getting on and off the couch and in entering and leaving the room—and this arose in relation to connections that I, and then he, began to make as he would talk about his interest in games and sports.

Games

X, about six months after beginning analysis, mentioned—apologetically, in a low voice, as if confessing a sin—that he was a dedicated chess player. X loved chess—it could make him happy, but this hidden garden of pleasure had a serpent lurking in it that could bring forth misery as well. I was not surprised that, here too, beginning to win was followed by the need to lose. What was unexpected was the passionate *intensity* of his ambivalent, hostile yet excited, conflict-ridden yet fascinated, emotional involvement in chess.³

X seemed to care more for reading about chess—and, especially, for playing it—than about his business or his love life. This

³ Lenin, a man who was ruthlessly convinced that eggs had to be broken and that sometimes people had to be murdered in order to make (respectively) an omelet or a revolution, was a passionate chess player as a young man. He is purported to have declared that he had to give up chess in order to safeguard the emotional resources he needed for active revolutionary struggle.

man, who seemed to most people who knew him to be so masterful and at ease with people, was, beneath the gregarious surface, an isolated, bitter loner. His most important others were his opponents (sometimes quickly discarded, but often then subsequently replaced), primarily in chess, secondarily in tennis—another passion he had not told me about at first, and one that, unlike chess, directly involved muscular movement.⁴

X's Father

Chess had been taught to X in his childhood by his father, another dedicated (though not very good) player. He was a successful, well-liked, and respected politician. The father—fluent, friendly, gregarious in the public arena—was cold, uninterested, and often competitive and full of rage toward his wife and children in his home life. He and X's mother would barely speak to one another; there was a predominantly silent war between them—more mutually hostile stares than words were exchanged. They slept in separate bedrooms, and X declared he had never seen them embrace; yet they had had many children. X's bedroom was near his mother's and he remembered listening to frequent and disturbing sounds, including and accompanying those of mattress creakings.

X's Mother

His mother was usually more aware of X's needs than was his father, but she was the weaker of the pair, and was increasingly emotionally unavailable to him past his first few years, when a long series of new births began. Her resistance to father's dominance was passively expressed both by embittered silence and by subtle, provocative disobedience and sabotage.

None of this atmosphere of underground warfare was in evidence at the frequent social and political parties and meetings that took place in their large home. This enraged X and his brothers;

⁴ Muscular movement, posture, and bodily manifestations on and off the couch have been extensively described in the psychoanalytic literature by Judith Kestenberg and James McLaughlin.

otherwise, the parental hypocrisy (his word) was noted only by the servants. Among the servants was a loving nanny—a most important, but also a weak, maternal substitute, who was unfortunately dismissed when X was five or six. He then hated her for leaving him.

Although he had vague memories (or were they fantasies?) of his mother's caring for him before the parade of births started, she subsequently turned away from her older children (brothers) and would emotionally fasten on the most recent; the younger siblings were mainly sisters. There was a series of nurse/nannies, mainly for the younger children. X felt especially deprived of maternal care.

The siblings in this household so deficient in love and empathy were very competitive and predominantly hostile toward one another. X was, he felt—and his parents certainly treated him as if he were—the most intelligent of them, and his success at school made him the object of his siblings' envious rage. X repeatedly declared bitterly in his sessions, "They all hated me!"

Father and Chess

X's function as his father's opponent at chess began very well, supplying an important positive bond for several years while the very young boy was learning the game. Involvement in chess with father seemed to mean that father loved him. But this changed dramatically when X became able to rival his father's skill and eventually to defeat him. His father couldn't stand losing; he would become furious, or, even worse, express his rage toward the boy with the same silent hostility he directed toward his wife. The father finally refused to play chess with him when X became a teenager. The desperate need to be loved through the contact in chess made X so vulnerable that it disappeared from consciousness, leaving him aware only of his equally intense hatred and competitiveness.

From being his father's favorite son, X was transformed into the center of hostile attention that he furthered by being provocative toward his parents. He became the scapegoat of his father and brothers. (The despised sisters, who apparently didn't count,

weren't mentioned by X. I felt this was in part due to X's fear of his own unacknowledged feminine/passive and anal/homosexual wishes.) What seemed worst of all was X's feeling that his mother had allowed all to this happen; he felt more angry toward her than toward his father.

For awhile, X gave up chess and chose outdoor sports, chiefly tennis. He was never popular or even comfortable with other boys, especially in the larger groups involved in playing football, baseball, and basketball. He dreaded being in the changing room for gym in his prestigious prep school. In college, he began to enter chess tournaments and did well at first; but then he started an intermittent pattern of retreating from winning, especially in crucial games with really good opponents. He had little trouble beating inferior players, but up against capable competitors, he felt a tormenting compulsion—allowing himself to begin to succeed often enough to promise a win, but then almost always losing the game. He seemed doomed to lose, as in the early days of playing chess with his father. Life became a kind of tragic chessboard for him.

X also continued his interest in tennis with a similar pattern of needing to avoid, or to seek defeat after, victory. His father was a very good tennis player. In contrast to the chess games, X could never defeat his father at tennis, and, subsequently, almost never could win when playing tennis against other father figures, even if they were inferior players. Despite his humiliations, a compulsive and hopeful involvement in tennis had continued. He did better playing doubles with a partner.

The pattern in relation to tennis—the sport he still could enjoy because, he said, of the physical activity involved—seemed easier for X to accept than the losses in sedentary combat in chess. There was more passion attached to chess. Father had first turned toward him and then separated from him emotionally in relation to warfare at chess. Father still came fully alive in X's mind at the chessboard—and, at least unconsciously, so did the contradictory wishes to be loved by and to kill father.

In the analysis, X speculated insistently on whether I played chess or tennis.

Mother, Chess, and Women

The chessboard also evoked X's mother and his attitude toward women. In his sexual life, he mainly chose masochistic women. With these submissive, and sometimes would-be loving, women, he was able to be a sexual athlete, but they were quickly despised and discarded. The only women whom he seemed able to continue to stay interested in for longer periods were those who rejected or mistreated him. (In this, he resembled Swann in Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*.) The relationships were predominantly emotionally sadomasochistic, although not sexually so except in fantasy.

After a long time in analysis, X began to realize how anxious he became with any woman who cared about him. Only then was he able to admit to himself responsibly that he had a sexual problem. He finally said: "I have no trouble fucking, but great trouble loving." He could be an angry conqueror of women for whom he felt nothing but excitement, followed frequently by disgust. It was as if he were a machine: a sexual automaton who could, without feeling, win the game, capturing the pawns and even the queen—and, unconsciously, killing the king.

X's associations in his analysis included his identifying the queen as mother. In anthropomorphized chess fantasies, he himself usually played the part of the pawn or the knight who, in consort with the queen, would checkmate the king.

Chess, Oedipus, and Jocasta

For X, the chessboard invoked the meeting of the three roads at Thebes, where Oedipus struck down his father, Laius. X's masochistic patterns in relation to business, sex, tennis, and chess were repeated in the course of his seeing me in the transference as either parent (although most frequently as his father). X emphasized the primacy of his relationship to his father for most of his treatment.

But there was an even deeper and more dangerous, ambivalent attachment to his mother, which was worked on but never fully worked through. X's feminine identifications and homosexual

impulses were intellectually accepted and talked about; and transference fantasies would emerge, sometimes with considerable feeling, but he resisted exploring them in a way that permitted him to own them emotionally. X felt that his mother had preferred father and his younger siblings, and had been less loving—yet, it turned out, more seductive—toward him; she was his Jocasta.

CHESS AND OEDIPUS IN THE PSYCHOANALYTIC LITERATURE

I will not attempt an extended psychoanalytic exploration of chess, since this was done (emphasizing the game's connections with the Oedipus complex) by Reider (1959). He reviewed the general and the psychological literature on chess. He pointed out that, at one time, chess was literally "the royal game," the playing of it restricted to royalty:

Commoners were at times even punished when caught playing the game . . . Chess is the royal game for many reasons. It crystallizes within its elaborate structure the family romance, is replete with symbolism, and has rich potentialities for granting satisfaction and for sublimation of drives. [Reider 1959, pp. 320, 322]

Reider related the game primarily to aggression, but also to love—caring love, but (especially in relation to conflict) incestuous love. He called aggression "the soul of the game" (p. 321), adding: "Chess as a military game provides warfare which is organized, controlled, circumscribed and regulated" (p. 322). He quoted from Jones's (1931) paper centering on the case of a chess prodigy, in which Jones "developed the thesis that chess is a game of father-murder" (Reider, p. 323). Reider also noted that chess can easily become an addiction. (So can tennis or any other sport, of course.)

Chess as Father-Murder: Arthur Koestler

The English author Julian Barnes (1989) wrote of his encounter as a 36-year-old with one of his cultural heroes, the 77-year-old

(and very ill) famous writer Arthur Koestler. Koestler was the author of the celebrated novel *Darkness at Noon* and of other novels, as well as autobiographical, scientific, and political nonfiction. Both men were fascinated by chess (Koestler had been a chess champion at the University of Vienna), and they agreed to play a three-game series. Koestler had, with great gusto, won the first game; the second was fairly easily won by Barnes.

Barnes then felt guilty when Koestler, an admired man old enough to be his father, was so obviously distressed by losing, and he considered letting the sick old fellow win the last game. But then he told himself it was not something a true chess lover would do, and decided he would play to win. At first, he seemed to be succeeding. Barnes (1989) comments:

Chess is a game of courteous aggression—and therefore very suitable for Arthur—but the courtesy and formality only serve to sharpen and focus the aggression. As Arthur's first attack develops, he immediately stops being a 77-year-old invalid. He becomes a ferocious assailant trying personally *to damage me, to overthrow and humiliate me*. [p. 30, italics added]

Koestler ultimately won the last game and took the series, two out of three.

This quotation demonstrates the potential physical ferocity of competitive anger (here a conflict between men of two different generations) in a vis-à-vis game that involves the Oedipus-evoking killing off of a queen and a king.

KILLING AND SEX EVOKED BY PHYSICAL POSITION IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

With assassination, the assault can come from the front or from behind. With psychiatric consultation and in most psychotherapy, the beginning, face-confronting-face positioning changes, if and when psychoanalytic treatment follows, to the patient's lying on the couch,

looking away from the analyst. But a patient in psychotherapy continues to confront his therapist face to face—as potential gladiatorial opponents do in chess, boxing, wrestling, and tennis.

In both psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, the respective competitive—and, psychologically, potentially murderous—juxtapositions can of course bring forth individually different affective associations from each patient, including loving, sexual, and incestuous ones. Both juxtapositions can involve intense danger for both participants, at least unconsciously. The analyst's being in back of the patient, who lies on the couch in front of and lower than the analyst, leaves the patient in a more helpless position, in which he cannot see or be easily aware of the movements and therefore the potential actions of the analyst.

Confrontations and the Oedipus Complex

In my writings, I have repeatedly stressed my observation that, for most people I have seen in psychoanalysis, the murderous (paricidal) impulses involved in the Oedipus complex appear to be more repressed than the sexual (incestuous) ones. My observations are based on both patients' associations and their reactions—and from the answers I get when I ask students or others to define the Oedipus complex. The mother/son and father/daughter incestuous impulses are almost always mentioned; the negative oedipal (homosexual), and especially the paricidal, ones are often not.

Oedipus, according to Sophocles (and other sources of the myth), met a stranger, who turned out to be the father he had never seen, at a pass where three roads meet. The older man was seated in a chariot, facing Oedipus, and he struck at Oedipus, who had slain the attendant who was leading the horses and had tried to shove the younger man aside. Oedipus then killed the unknown rider.

Oedipus: "There were three highways
Coming together at a place I passed;
And there a herald came towards me, and a chariot
Drawn by horses, with a man such as you describe

Seated in it. The groom leading the horses
 Forced me off the road at his lord's command;
 But as this charioteer lurched over toward me
 I struck him in my rage. The old man saw me
 And brought his double goad down upon my head
 As I came abreast.
 He was paid back, and more!
 Swinging my club in this right hand I knocked him
 Out of his cart, and he rolled on the ground.
 I killed him. I killed them all."

[Sophocles, c. 429 B.C., p. 41]

Note that, in this encounter, the father was initially seated higher than the son (as the analyst is usually seated higher than the analysand).

Sex—and in early life, incest in relation to parental contacts—involves movement and romping that prefigure involvement in sports and games. Freud (1905) stressed the importance of the infant's and child's sexual excitation aroused by muscular activity, as well as by actual contact:

One of the roots of the sadistic instinct would seem to lie in the encouragement of sexual excitation by muscular activity. In many people the infantile connection between romping and sexual excitation is among the determinants of the direction subsequently taken by their sexual instinct. [p. 203]

In a footnote, Freud adds:

[There is] no doubt as to the sexual nature of pleasure in movement. Modern education, as we know, makes great use of games in order to divert young people from sexual activity. It would be more correct to say that in these young people it replaces sexual enjoyment by pleasure in movement and forces sexual activity back to one of its auto-erotic components. [p. 203n]

Muscular activity is directly involved in tennis, and it is accompanied by direct contact in wrestling and boxing; such activity is

largely minimal and sublimated in making the “moves” of the playing pieces in chess.

SEXUAL POSITIONS

In human beings, penis/vagina sexual intercourse can of course be performed either face to face (the “missionary position”) or front to back, as with most other species. Penis/anus contact is almost always front to back. The psychoanalytic patient lies supine on a couch in front of the analyst. The analysand is facing ahead with his front exposed. The analysand’s wished-for as well as feared sexual attack by the parental substitute is usually expected to come from behind, where the analyst is positioned.

Sex as mounting and penetrating or being penetrated from behind (sometimes referred to in slang as the “doggy position”) should not be considered intrinsically unnatural or abnormal. But it is probably more primitive in the course of evolution, and it seems to be frequently more imbued with aggressiveness and rage than the frontal penis/vagina position.

THE POWER AND UBIQUITY OF PRIMITIVE (“PRE-GENITAL”) AGGRESSION

Both the genito-urinary openings and the anal opening of the body develop, evolutionarily and in the growth of the human fetus, from the primitive common cloaca. Rage is often first expressed with biting and oral erogeneity. The infant’s biting and wishing to bite the mother’s breast, and then the mother—autocannibalism (“I am the breast; the breast is part of me,” Freud 1938), and then cannibalism—are impulses of terrible (cannibalistic) intensity that is supplemented by what in later erotogenetic development becomes a predominantly anal sadism. In early life, anger is (and unconsciously remains) a potentially terrifying emotion, and this stays in the adult unconscious mind. Young children feel with terror that their rage can kill the parents they cannot live without.⁵

⁵ See Shengold (1987) for further explanation and documentation of these and further pronouncements about rage and anality.

Analinity lurks behind the couch, and, regressively, so does the even more primitive and frightening cannibalistic rage of the earlier period. Analinity in sexuality, in most of the patients I have seen, seems more imbued with hate than love. Most rape, whatever the realistic anatomical details, is psychologically—in fantasy—degraded anal rape. But anger, rape, cruelty, and even murder can also be predominant in the front-to-front confrontation; and, as one hears from some patients (homosexual and heterosexual), tenderness can be present in anal intercourse—with the active partner wanting to give pleasure to the other as well as to the self. The mysteries of sexuality are full of contradictions.

The epithet “Fuck you!” is not a loving expression and unconsciously evokes anal rape. (The actual conscious thought or action may involve the vagina, but in unconscious fantasy, it is hostile anal, degraded-vaginal, or cloacal rape.) The common curses “Up yours!” and “Up your ass!” and “Go fuck yourself!” (all usually, but not always, spoken man to man) also openly express the association of analinity with hostility; this can be true both for the object and the subject of these wishes. The often-heard “Watch your ass!” is a warning signal for being cheated or hurt that expresses nonphysical and physical danger in anal (body) language.

VLADIMIR NABOKOV: WRITING, CHESS, LEPIDOPTERA, AND TENNIS

Vladimir Nabokov, the great and brilliant multilingual writer, was born in Russia in 1899, to rich, cultivated, upper-class parents. As a young man, he gained a reputation as a leading poet. After the Bolshevik Revolution, he went into exile with his family; they eventually settled in Berlin. There, when Vladimir was twenty-three, his father was killed at a political meeting by two Russian Monarchist extremists. (The elder Vladimir, a well-known, pro-democratic, “liberal” politician under the czarist regime, had, before the 1917 revolution, been jailed for organizing a protest after the czar arbitrarily dismissed the Duma, of which he was a leading member.)

Nabokov continued during the 1920s to publish poetry and novels in Russian in the émigré press. The title of his second novel, *King, Queen, Knave* (1928), is an allusion to a (potentially addictive and hostile, confrontational) game of cards (knave = jack of cards). His third novel, *Zashchita Luzhina* (1930)—literally meaning *Luzhin's defense* (in its translated English version, it is entitled *The Defense* [1964])⁶—centers metaphorically and realistically on chess. The protagonist, Luzhin, is a champion chess player, and the novel is not only about chess, but is also designed as if it were taking place on a chessboard (just as is a part of Lewis Carroll's *Alice Through the Looking Glass*).

The World as a Chessboard

Exemplifying the epigraph by Huxley at the beginning of this paper, Alice in Carroll's second Alice book also lives out a chess game. Shortly after Alice meets the Red Queen, we find the following passage:

For some minutes Alice stood without speaking, looking out in all directions over the country—and a most curious country it was. There were a number of little brooks running straight across it from side to side, and the ground between was divided up into squares by a number of little green hedges, that touched from brook to brook.

"I declare it's marked out just like a huge chess-board!" Alice said at last . . . Her heart began to beat quick with excitement as she went on. "It's a huge game of chess that's being played—all over the world." [Gardner 1960, pp. 207-208]

Emigration

In 1937, to escape the Nazis, Nabokov left Germany for Prague and then France. (His wife, Vera, whom he loved passionately until

⁶ In the novel, *defense* means not only Luzhin's defensive strategy in chess, but also his psychic defense against feeling and involvement. Both defenses ultimately fail.

he died, was Jewish.⁷) Most Russian immigrants, especially Jews, left Nazi Germany before 1937; many Russians left Berlin to settle in Paris. Nabokov finally decided to leave when one of his father's killers was appointed an official of the Nazi Department of Alien Affairs, which was engaged in hunting down Jews; that made him feel there was no choice but escape.

There is something Hamlet-like in Nabokov's delay in joining his fellow Russian émigrés, and then in finally being motivated to leave Berlin by the danger from his father's killer; his having stayed so long seems masochistic. He caught one of the last passenger ships to go to America from France in 1940, just before the fall of France.

Nabokov was a master linguist. He wrote in a fluent English prose of dazzling virtuosity; as a child, he had had a series of English (and French) governesses in St. Petersburg, and had also gone to college at Cambridge.⁸ In the United States, he taught (notably, at Cornell University) and began to write and publish novels and stories in English. His first "American" books were well received critically, and he became famous when his 1955 novel, *Lolita*, became a wild success internationally, in both critical and commercial spheres.⁹ Nabokov was suddenly internationally recognized as a great writer.

Butterflies and Moths

Nabokov senior (both father and son had the given name Vladimir, with the writer being Vladimir Vladimirovich) was a passion-

⁷ Although that love was apparently compatible with extramarital affairs, these diminished and probably stopped after the first four or five years of their marriage. Vera was a constant companion and helper to Nabokov; he writes in one of his letters that she was one of the two or three people who could really understand his work (the other one named was his dead father).

⁸ Nabokov's parents became alarmed when they realized that their child, who had learned to read English before he read Russian, knew the English but not the Russian alphabet, and they hired a series of tutors to teach him Russian writing and to perfect his Russian. His mother, also skilled at languages, used to read English books to the boy.

⁹ Nabokov made several references in *Lolita* to Alice and to Lewis Carroll (whom he saw as a forerunner of Humbert Humbert in that book). Nabokov had

ate lepidopterist, and, as with chess and tennis, the son here emulated the father. Nabokov junior was a lifelong lover of, avid collector of, and famous writer and expert on Lepidoptera: butterflies and moths—those delicate creatures whose life begins as wormlike caterpillars and who evoke connotations of the ineffable, the transient, of magical transformations (promising the eternal), and epiphanies.¹⁰

Both suborders of the insect species Lepidoptera can be victims, ruthlessly destroyed and transfixed on pins by collectors and aficionados. In this sense, they can be seen as losers in the game of life (e.g., in Belasco's play and Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly*). Nabokov also sought out beautiful specimens of moths. Moths can connote a general fragility and a specific attraction to deadly flames. Yet moths (in contrast to butterflies) are generally regarded as destroyers, especially the clothes-moth—confounded (as they used to be and still can be) with their ravaging larvae.

Species of Lepidopterae are reacted to with intense ambivalence: moths appear to be most often demonized; butterflies are usually idealized. The sadomasochistic impulses and psychic resonances associated with these delicate flying creatures are not always in responsible consciousness. Addiction to collecting butterflies means wholesale murder of them.

Nabokov, an addictive collector and killer of butterflies, despised Freud's psychoanalytic observations and theories, which he regarded, frequently with paranoid intensity, as not only reductive but also mendacious. Grayson (2001) relates that he gave a public lecture in Berlin denouncing Freud's ideas. Indeed, Nabokov did not like the idea of unconscious motivations—especially those that stem from what Freud called the bodily instincts and the body ego and, above all, those that involve parents. For example, he derisively denied the Oedipus complex, although his fiction is full of

translated *Alice in Wonderland* into German while an exile in Berlin (see Appel 1970, pp. 381-382).

¹⁰ See Shengold (1999) for a disquisition on the symbolic meanings of both butterflies and moths, including death (i.e., the death's head moths).

instances of it. And he was especially nasty in his sarcastic dismissal of the primal scene and neurotic involvement with parents.

One suspects that Nabokov had neurotic reasons that influenced his depth of sarcasm, and he certainly would have derided and denied my assumption here. I quote one of many sarcastic—and funny—assaults on the Viennese master from Nabokov's preface to *The Defense* (1964):

In the Prefaces I have been writing of late for the English-language editions of my Russian novels I have made it a rule to address a few words of encouragement to the Viennese delegation. The present Foreword shall not be an exception. Analysts and analyzed will enjoy, I hope, certain details of the treatment Luzhin is subjected to after his breakdown (such as the curative insinuation that a chess player sees Mom in his Queen and Pop in his opponent's King), and the little Freudian who mistakes a Pixlok set for the key to a novel will no doubt continue to identify my characters with his comic-book notion of my parents, sweethearts and serial selves. For the benefit of such sleuths I may as well confess that I gave Luzhin my French governess, my pocket chess set, my sweet temper, and the stone of the peach I plucked in my own walled garden. [pp. 10-11]

I think Nabokov is right to be angry with psychoanalytic reductive pronouncements; but he “doth protest too much” (to echo another queen, Hamlet's mother Gertrude) against the “insinuations.”

When the annotator of *Lolita*, Alfred Appel, Jr., asked Nabokov about Freud in an interview, the writer responded: “Oh, I am not up to discussing again that figure of fun Let the credulous and vulgar continue to believe that all mental woes can be cured by a daily application of old Greek myths to their private parts” (Appel 1970, p. 325).

Nabokov's second Russian novel (1928), which he translated into English in 1968, is titled *King, Queen, Knave*. The book involves an affair between an aunt and her younger lover and nephew; they attempt, unsuccessfully, to kill the husband/uncle. Nabokov

kov dealt repeatedly in his fiction with the power of sexuality, and his novels and stories are full of incest (*Lolita* [1955],¹¹ *Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle* [1969]), homosexuality (*Pale Fire* [1962]¹²), and murder.

Tennis

Nabokov's family had their own tennis court in Russia, and Vladimir started to play as a boy; he was a dedicated tennis player for his whole life. At eight, he was taught by a man who had coached the then-current French tennis champion. Vladimir and his mother would play doubles against his younger brother and his father. While in exile in Berlin, he gave lessons in tennis to help support himself (see Appel 1970, p. 419). He did well in tennis at Cambridge and coached his wife, Vera. His father, who taught him the game, was, Nabokov writes (1966), "a first class player, with a cannonball service . . . and a beautiful 'lifting drive'" (p. 42). (In the writer's wonderful memoir, *Speak, Memory* [Nabokov 1966], the reader is not told if the author had any trouble winning when opposing his father in such oedipal line-ups.)

In *Lolita*, the character Humbert Humbert teaches Lolita tennis, and there is a rhapsodic passage about his obsession with her 14-year-old body as he observes it in her tennis moves (pp. 232-234). Nabokov, in the novel's passages on tennis, is making an anal-

¹¹ *Lolita* is a sardonic love letter to America. Although the cosmopolitan writer lived so many years in Germany, France, and Switzerland, and was fluent in so many languages, he seems to have regarded himself primarily as a Russian and an American. He was ambivalent toward both—Russia rejected him, and he left America to live in Montreux for the last ten years of his life. I am tempted to say that Russia and America could represent motherland and fatherland for him, which would give them dynamically shifting, symbolic oedipal significance.

¹² Henry F. Smith, in reading an earlier version of this paper, said that my footnotes (since somewhat diminished in number) reminded him of those that dominate Nabokov's *Pale Fire*. In that novel, the psychotic, prolific, pedophilic, paranoid annotator of the long poem he has stolen and "edited" believes he is the exiled king of a mythical country (Zembla), and that he is the object of a potentially murderous attack by a Zemblan terrorist. "Killing the king" has connotations of *Hamlet* and of chess.

ogy between the tennis court and a chess board.¹³ Nabokov-as-Humbert generalizes: "I suppose I am especially susceptible to the magic of games" (p. 233), and gives a lyrical description of his fascination with the chess board. Appel (1970) comments: "H. H. is speaking for his maker, who would hope that the reader shares this limpid view of the game board that is *Lolita*" (p. 418).

Chess and Chess Problems

Nabokov was obsessed with chess, which he played, read about, and wrote about. He was a good player and even, Grayson (2001) writes, had a match with a future world champion. Boyd (1991) states that Nabokov was "not brilliant at the chess board"—in contrast to his being "a superb composer of chess problems" (p. 135).¹⁴ As an adult, he was particularly preoccupied—almost to the point of addiction, as with his preoccupation with butterflies—by composing chess problems¹⁵ (like his hero Luzhin from his novel *The Defense*). He began to compose these when he was eighteen, and in his later years, even published a book of them. Nabokov writes (1966):

In the course of my twenty years of exile I devoted a prodigious amount of time to the composing of chess problems It is a beautiful, complex and sterile art related

¹³ Appel (1970) comments on the interplay in *Lolita* between chess and tennis: "Not by chance does [Nabokov] have H. H. poeticize Lolita's tennis game, on a court invested with geometric perfection" (p. 233). Appel points out that the tennis court is described by allusion as *tesselated*, a word defined as "form[ed] or arrange[d] in a checkered or mosaic pattern" (*Webster's American College Dictionary*, 1952, p. 251).

¹⁴ While teaching at Cornell, Nabokov played his fellow teacher, Max Black, a former chess champion at Cambridge, who "had once defeated Arthur Koestler [!], in four moves" (Boyd 1991, p. 135). Nabokov lost two games and never played Black again.

¹⁵ An example of Nabokov's written-out chess problems (some of which he used to mail to his father) appears in Grayson's biography (2001, p. 44). It shows Nabokov's skill at drawing and looks like a sketch for a painting by an abstract painter (some combination of Mondrian and Klee), and is perhaps evidence of some ambivalent compulsions about order and disorder. (Again, Nabokov would have loathed my speculative psychopathologizing.)

to the ordinary form of the game only insofar as, say, the properties of a sphere are made use of . . . by a *tennis player* in winning a tournament. Most chess players, in fact amateurs and masters alike, are only mildly interested in these highly specialized, fanciful stylish riddles. [p. 488, italics added]

Nabokov describes his creative passion in relation to this sublimated involvement in chess—with his playing both the black and the white pieces—which he goes on to compare to his similar passion in relation to his writing:

Inspiration of a quasi-musical, quasi-poetical, or to be quite exact, poetical-mathematical type, attends the process of thinking up a chess composition of that sort. Frequently, in the friendly middle of the day, on the fringe of some trivial occupation, in the idle wake of a passing thought, I would experience, without warning, a twinge of mental pleasure as the bud of a chess problem burst open in my brain, promising me a night of labor and felicity . . . and my only quarrel with it today is that the maniacal manipulation of carved figures, or of their mental counterparts, during my most ebullient and prolific years engulfed so much of the time I could have devoted to verbal adventure. [1966, pp. 488-489]¹⁶

Nabokov expresses some of the hostile excitement involved in the game:

Themes in chess, it may be explained, are such devices as forelaying, withdrawing, pinning, unpinning and so forth; but it is only when they are combined in a certain way that a problem is satisfying. *Deceit to the point of diabolism*, and originality, verging upon the grotesque were my notions of strategy . . . I was always ready to sacrifice purity of form to the exigencies of fantastic content, causing form to bulge and burst like a sponge-bag *containing a small furious devil*. [1966, pp. 289-290, italics added]

¹⁶ The last sentence of this quotation calls to mind Lenin's remark on chess, quoted earlier in this paper (see footnote 3, p. 408).

Nabokov was himself that devil. Alongside his intense conscious love for family members—especially his parents, wife, and son—there was a sometimes paranoid hatred of others. (In his novel *Pale Fire* [1962], Nabokov knowingly showed his identification with two characters: both the American poet who is murdered, and the psychotic “Zemblian” Kinbote who, at least in his fantasies, creates the murder.) Nabokov expressed hatred in the forewords to so many of his novels, thinly covered by his wit. Grayson (2001) used the apt phrase “rebarbative arrogance” (p. 113) to characterize these ex cathedra, hostile pronouncements.

Nabokov had never gotten along with his younger brother Sergei, who was born less than a year after Vladimir himself. He hated some father figures—such as Freud and, surprisingly, Dostoevski, whom he refused to regard as a great writer (and yet he idealized Tolstoy and, to a lesser extent, Pushkin, Gogol, and Chekhov). But his most intense and quasi-delusional, hateful disparagement was aimed at current (sometimes envied) Russian writers who were brother figures. These included the novelist Ivan Bunin, who had been the leading émigré writer in Berlin when Nabokov began to publish his work there, and Boris Pasternak, another victim of Soviet persecution (toward whom one would have expected Nabokov to have sympathy). But Pasternak and not Nabokov won the Nobel Prize, and *Doctor Zhivago* replaced *Lolita* at the top of the bestseller lists in America (see Grayson 2001). The bitter rivalry was there, despite *Lolita*’s having received overwhelmingly positive American and international acclaim and made its author a millionaire.

Nabokov’s rivalry and rage were also expressed toward many talented and great American writers; he disliked John Updike, who had called Nabokov the greatest living American novelist.¹⁷ For Nabokov, the murderous impulses of the Oedipus complex were displaced from within the family to competitive outsiders.

¹⁷ This intense hatred toward fellow writers reminds me of the killer Solyony in Chekhov’s *The Three Sisters* (1901), who duels with and kills Irina’s betrothed, Tusenbach, after having said to Irina when she rebuffs his love, “I swear to you I will kill any rivals” (p. 182).

Order, Pattern, and Design

Brian Boyd (1990), Nabokov's brilliant, definitive biographer, comments on the contradictory nature of his subject's personality, citing Nabokov's joy in liberation and "the unconstrained mobility of mind" in general and, of course, his own creative mind in particular, which nevertheless existed alongside a craving for order that showed up in his "prizing pattern and design" (p. 9)—so evident in his passion for chess. In his writing, Nabokov could control and order the precariousness and uncontrollable vagaries of the human condition. In a moving passage in his autobiography, Nabokov (1966) talked of the preciousness of one's love for a person:

I have to have all space and time participate in my emotion, in my mortal love, so that the edge of its mortality is taken off, thus helping me to fight the utter degradation, ridicule and horror of having developed an infinity of sensation and thought within a finite existence. [p. 297]

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERPRETING POSITIONS AND CONFRONTATIONS IN PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY

There are many ways of assisting the patient in catching and ultimately *owning* (= feeling emotional conviction about) the revival of the psychic conflicts of the past as they come into renewed affective life in relation to the analyst and the analytic situation. These efforts involve the analyst's making use of the patient's associations to—and, when deemed timely, providing interpretations of—the phenomena of transference, projection, and resistance.

Part of the work inevitably focuses on the analysand's reactions to the geography and furnishings of the analyst's waiting room and office; the mutual movements, positions, and motor patterns of the therapeutic pair; the significance of thresholds—of going in and out; of analyst and analysand saying or not saying hello and goodbye—all these are involved in contrapositions (confrontations

and turnings away) and relate to the importance of the analytic room as a symbol of the body. In this paper, I am emphasizing the juxtapositions of each member of the analyst/analysand pair because I have found these matters useful to the work on transference and resistance.

Visual and Postural Confrontation

Positions and confrontations were crucial to the coming to life of my patient X's traumatic childhood in relation to me. Whether he paused to say goodbye, whether and how he turned toward or away from me when the session was over, the meaning of his sitting in the chair as distinct from lying on the couch—all these turned out to be richly evocative of meaningful associations, many of them involving chess and tennis, that eventually, with emotional resonance for X, enabled him to connect the present and the past.

Working on confrontations and positions where I could play the role of the opponent (one to one, as in chess and tennis) helped bring to life his conflicts (preoedipal as well as oedipal) over and with parents in the past, and in relation to the analyst in the present, making conflict-ridden affects available. With X, there was also a lot of provocative, witty, verbal "dueling" (another one-against-one sport) that evoked a sense of competition, countertransference, and even some verbal enactment on my part; this, too, turned out to be fruitful material in furthering the analytic process.

Recently, when rereading Boyd's (1990) wonderful biography of Nabokov, I was struck by his mentioning that, shortly before Nabokov was to write his chess novel, *The Defense* (1928) (which, as I have said, is based on an understructure of moves on a chess board), he had written a poem, "The Chess Knight," which prefigured it. The poem is about a psychotic chess master who

. . . starts to see the world in chess terms, registers a plank floor as light and dark squares, and construes two people in the doorway as a *black* king and a pawn. Trying to escape [his opponents] *he leaps in knight moves across the squares*, and away he is taken to an asylum, "captured" by the "*black* king." [Boyd 1990, p. 275, italics added]

I have heard Freud quoted as saying, with reference to a figure in a dream, "The black man is the father in the dark"—a comment that would be politically incorrect these days, but at times may be apt in terms of unconscious meaning.

Reading this caused me to recall the peculiar way that X, at the beginning of his treatment, used to traverse the straight corridor between the entrance to my office and my consulting room. I was facing him at my desk, where he could see me and I could see him (a confrontation) through the door left open, whenever he followed his usual habit of coming late. He had a strange way of intermittently lurching to the side, his body shifting in a sort of L-shaped (or mirrored L) fashion. This would continue sometimes after he entered the room. It disappeared in the course of the treatment, as did the habitual, provocative lateness. But it strikes me now that X was proceeding (though not leaping) "in knight moves." In retrospect, I feel I should have seen this and connected it at an appropriate time during the analysis.

The analyst and the analysand can be regarded as (but not reduced to) potential antagonists in a contest that potentially involves murderous aggression, which needs to be modified to allow for the tolerance of caring love from the analyst parent-figure. Nabokov was able to retain his idealized love for his father; his aggression shifted toward others. Toward the end of his analysis, X was also able to accept the analyst as a caring figure, as well as an opposing, hateful one. This was accomplished partly by a traversal of transference and countertransference feelings in relation to chess and tennis. There is a kind of creative exchange, emotionally and intellectually, between the analyst and patient (if all goes well) that has a kinship with the creative ability of a writer like Nabokov to transcend his psychopathology through the miracle of his artistic work.

CONCLUSION

Unlike in sports, there should not be a winner and a loser in the psychoanalytic encounter. If the analysis fails, both parties are losers. But of course, both can also succeed. The patient eventually

suffers the loss of—or eliminates—his opponent in actuality, but should be able, in time, to psychically retain the analyst in his mind, now as a fellow human being who must also face the tricky and sometimes malignant and ultimately tragic vicissitudes of life and of fate.

Once this is achieved, the opponents can stand side by side. The royal game is ended, although some of it remains in the mind in a way that the patient can make use of; but what also remains to be faced is the human condition. A successful analytic experience can make one stronger. But human life is still treacherous, always involving loss alongside gain; there are no permanently safe positions, and, eventually, checkmate comes to us all.

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BERLIOZ'S SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE: ENRICHING PSYCHOANALYTIC VIEWS OF CREATIVITY

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Focusing on the eighteenth-century French composer Hector Berlioz as he is revealed in his masterpiece Symphonie Fantastique and in his Memoirs, this paper investigates a proposed intermediate area between healthy creativity and paralyzing neurosis. Artists like Berlioz use their work primarily to manage what has been variously labeled as Seelenschmerz, narcissistic injury, and painful fluctuation of internal object representations. Their affectively unprocessed experiences are incorporated into their artwork, so that their heightened experience of Seelenschmerz has particular effects on their audience. Our consideration of these dynamics allows Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique to regain the truly harrowing impact that it evoked before it became assimilated as a tamed icon of Romantic-era expressiveness.

Art is a human activity consisting of this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to other feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them But most of all is the degree of infectiousness increased by the degree of sincerity in the artist . . . i.e., that the artist should be impelled by

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an inner need to express his feeling . . . [that] the artist has drawn it from the depths of his nature.

—Leo Tolstoy (1896, pp. 49, 141)

Oh how alone I feel, how I suffer within myself! How wretchedly constituted I am—a true barometer, now up, now down, subject to the variations in the atmosphere, brilliant or somber, of my consuming thoughts.

—Hector Berlioz (quoted in Cairns 1999, p. 357)

INTRODUCTION

A 25-year-old fledgling composer fights for recognition. He has a cadre of male friends who support him. They sense his brilliance, despite their complaints about his excessive moodiness and torment-filled letters. The head of the local conservatory respects his musical output but is enraged by his temerity and insolence. His father, a well-known physician, has been disappointed with his son ever since he quit medical school to pursue an economically unfeasible career in music a few years earlier. The young man has few comforting interactions with his mother, an emotionally restrained woman wracked by abdominal pains and focused on religion. Indeed, his head has been filled with what he himself labels a *monde fantastique* of frenzied romantic images of women ever since he first heard about the exploits described in the *Aeneid* at age five. His 12-year-old heart nearly burst when he fell in love with a woman whom he saw dancing with his uncle; he pined for her years afterward as his very ideal of beauty and loveliness, despite the fact that he never actually met her.

After taking in two performances of Shakespeare for the first time, the young man is awestruck by how closely the intensity of Hamlet and Romeo and Juliet mirrors his own tumultuous reactions and taciturn moods. He becomes, in fact, transfixed by the foreign actress who plays Ophelia, and can only rapturously stare at her from his seat, mouth agape. His attempts to approach her to profess his love are rebuffed. Dejected, he lingers around the

entrance to the rehearsal theater to catch a glimpse of her entering and leaving. He writes to her, offers to provide music for her performances, and is politely told that the actress does not share his feelings. In response, he experiences "unbearable agitation." "I'm in a fever," he writes to a friend, "The pulsations of my heart are irregular . . . I have been prey to a sorrow from which nothing can distract me, and which has made me utterly weary of life." Obsessed and forlorn, he cannot compose at all and lurks on the grounds of the actors' theater when it is deserted. He cannot sleep and begins to wander the city late at night, sometimes to fall asleep in the open air, collapsed in a field or slumped over at a café table.

A year into his depression, the young composer confesses to a friend that he has come close to suicide, but has begun writing music again. He explains in letters that he is "meditating an immense instrumental composition" that he hopes to perform in London, thus achieving "a brilliant success in her presence" (referring to the Ophelia actress about whom he has become obsessed). Then, in one furiously active six-week period, he completes a five-movement work for full orchestra. Inspired not by a place or a classical work of art, this programmatic symphony is openly autobiographical—in fact, it details in music the very unfulfilled longings he has suffered for the actress, and the exquisite agony of overwrought feelings that is "the destiny of all true artists."

Against all convention, the young man insists that an introductory program be published ahead of the first performance to explain the piece's rationale in detail to his future audience. The music will assume the form of a fantasy in which he has taken an overdose of opiates and been filled with drug-inspired nightmares. In the fantasy, he imagines himself having killed his lover, and, caught, being marched by guards in front of a crowd to be guillotined. His execution and final thoughts in life are first described in the music, and then continue beyond his death: at his own funeral, he is forced to watch his lover resurrected as a ghastly creature, dancing and fornicating with demons in a mock-Sabbath orgy set musically to swirling rhythms, wild dynamic markings, and tolling church bells.

The premiere of his composition is a success. The young man's musical reputation is established, even as he is labeled a technically unrestrained, overly emotive composer. Two years later, he has edited and added a companion piece to his symphony, and all the musical and cultural luminaries of the country are to attend the return performance. Despite forswearing his love for the actress with whom he was obsessed, the young man, half-aware, moves into the apartment just vacated by her two days earlier. He tells his companions that he no longer cares about her—but is immediately disturbed to find that she is in town. His friends maneuver her attendance at the concert. He is conducting and does not see her in the audience. She realizes that she is the subject depicted in the music, recognizes his powerful feelings for her, and eventually agrees to marry him. But his idealization for her fades over the years as he gets to know her, and he begins to lead a life separate from her, with mistresses and trips out of the country. Once she has been separated from him, she becomes a physically incapacitated alcoholic and dies utterly abandoned by him.

* * * * *

Here, like a twentieth-century experimental artwork teeming with self-referential ideas and extra-artistic motives, is a historical account of the best-known work of the French composer Hector Berlioz, the *Symphonie Fantastique* of 1830. With his life of composing, conducting, music criticism, literary endeavors, and journalism, Berlioz (1803-1869) attempted to create and direct the world around him. This man, oftentimes overwhelming to himself and others, was nonetheless able to translate his mind's *monde fantastique* into technically and expressively innovative music that has since placed him alongside noted nineteenth-century composers such as Liszt and Schubert.

I hope in this study to enrich existing psychoanalytic models of the relationship between creativity and psychopathology by applying them to the fiery example of Berlioz's mind: his stirring masterpiece, *Symphonie Fantastique*. Close psychoanalytic scrutiny will also open up a fuller understanding of the inspirations for the

symphony, and the mechanisms by which the unbearable affective experience of its composer comes to infect the audience.

ON THE DYNAMIC IMPERATIVES BEHIND ARTISTIC CREATION

The Still-Open Question: Psychopathology and Creativity

The dynamic understanding of artwork that incorporates the unique character and psychopathology of the artist has undergone a long, steady modification (see Kaplan 1988, for example). Examples abound of the erosion of Freud's essentially positivistic endeavors in analyzing the childhood origins of great artists. Outside of psychoanalysis—as with 1950s structuralist theories of literature, and moving on through deconstructionist readings since the 1970s—the “text” as a bearer of meanings distinct from the intentions of its creator has been emphasized. A work's genesis was seen as more likely arising from political or sociological forces than psychological ones. The diagnosis of bipolar disorder or “bipolar temperament” (Jamison 1996) has become a popular “explanation” for artistic fervor, and neuroscientists have even begun attempts to map out the neurotransmitters responsible for creativity (Flaherty 2005).

From within psychoanalysis itself, in what has often felt like a necessary course correction, the field has tried to distance itself from its history of producing self-serving, deterministic studies that apply psychoanalytic meanings in a formulaic manner as they explain away an artist's work (Panel 1992). But creativity has become a kind of protected domain, sometimes co-occurring with—but mostly independent of—psychopathology. Even as twenty-first-century analysts might be willing to acknowledge in the most general sense that an artist's work reflects attempts at resolution of his underlying dynamic struggles, is there still intellectual room to trace an artist's formative experiences and track their interpolation into elements of his artwork?

Answers to this question have not always been so foreclosed during the history of applied psychoanalysis. A tension has been

present through varied twentieth-century psychoanalytic conceptions of the creative process: whether psychopathology is necessary for the successful production of art. (See Rothenberg [1990] or Mahler [1993] for more detailed reviews of this history.)

The earliest conceptions stressed the difference between art production and “neurosis.” In his seminal study on Leonardo da Vinci, Freud (1910) described the process by which “kindly nature has given the artist the ability to express his most secret mental impulses, which are hidden even from himself” (p. 107). Traumas within the family—in Leonardo’s case, the intensity of eroticized relations between mother and child—may become retouched and reworked in later artwork and intellectual achievement. Freud’s study focused on the descriptions of a fairly well-compensated man with “access to the halfway region of phantasy” whose ego was capable of transmuting the “proscribed sources” of his childhood “investigations” into highly successful and acceptable art (Freud 1917a, p. 376).

Rank (1932) went on to write further about the functions of art in allowing for discharge of early, painful urges in an acceptable fantasy sphere—specifically, those involving oedipal themes. In both instances, a psychoanalytic approach succeeded in showing how great works of art are born of the artist’s family romance, and also of “a strong capacity for sublimation, and a certain degree of laxity in the repressions” (Freud 1917a, p. 376). Artistic creation allows the artist to turn away from the paralyzing path of the neurotic in order to gain, in the real world, the satisfaction of “honour, power, and the love of women” (p. 376).

With his craft, the artist was seen as somehow able to avoid a revival of his “proscribed sources” (p. 376) in the recipient; the audience is spared a conscious awareness of the artist’s incipient conflict. What are the mechanisms of this special communication? How does the unconscious message travel from “the deepest layer of the artist’s mind to the deepest layer of the mind of the consumer” (Noy 1979, p. 238)? Kris, in his landmark *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (1952), likened the function of both the creation

and reception of art to the ego-protective functions employed by children in their fantasies. Potentially overwhelming oedipal wishes, for example, can be kept at a safe distance from consciousness if reworked into the more distant protagonists of a story line. In Kris's conception (see also Balter 1999), the successful artist is able to employ the "aesthetic illusion" (Kris 1952, p. 87) to convert highly personal, idiosyncratic, conflictual material into an acceptable—indeed, "better than pedestrian" (Gediman 1975, p. 420)—communication to the public.

Kris's (1936) famous concept of the artist's "regression in the service of the ego" (p. 290), ultimately a "non-regressive" solution, was adopted by psychoanalysis proper as a means of understanding therapeutic action. As a counter-example, Kris described the "psychotic artist" (1952, pp. 87-169), who turned to art production as a refuge, as an autistic means of expressing primary process material in an effort to channel such impulses. The product was personally meaningful, but usually not palatable to a general audience.

Since the 1960s, theorists have complicated the discussion of creativity to highlight artists with less adaptive health and more character pathology. The viewpoint of self psychology, as well as neo-Kleinian and British object relational perspectives on more regressed phenomena, has been applied (see Chessick 1986, 1999; Gedo 1983, for examples). Yet, the focus of how artists' unconscious structures affect their productions has again drifted away from the artist's self or character pathology. Gedo (1998), in his later writings, doubted even that a recognizable "psychology of creativity" exists. He wrote:

A particular set of personal attributes may promote or hinder success in creative endeavors in a specific social setting, but the only motive shared by all those who succeed in them is the effacement pleasure of exercising a talent beyond the average. [pp. 1305-1306]

Oremland (1998), too, observed that artists may indeed be so focused on their perceptive capacities that interpersonal related-

ness suffers, but stressed that such altered relatedness should not necessarily be considered pathological. Recently, Nass (2005) bemoaned a study of music and psychoanalysis for conceptualizing creativity as residing in “neurotic regression,” as opposed to in “shifts in perceptual organization” (p. 681).

In what seems to me an extension of the original, sanitized distinction between healthy and impaired artists, the contemporary conclusion sometimes drawn is that “neurosis and creativity represent two antipodal attempts to solve the same underlying problems” (Noy 1979, p. 254), but they tend to act in a mutually exclusive manner (see also Chessick 1999). Disturbed artists, in this conception, might still produce decent work, but these are, as Noy put it, “suboptimal solutions at the cost of using defenses, producing symptoms, and so on” (p. 254). In a review considering Beethoven’s successes, Chessick (2004) similarly stressed the walling off of the composer’s psychopathology.

I would argue that, in between the “healthy” artist who charges his artwork with just enough transmuted, unconsciously motivated material to win over yet not overwhelm his audience, and Kris’s (1936, 1952) psychotic artist who scribbles senseless wordplay on the wall of his hospital room, are underscrutinized “intermediate” examples. In my role as the consultant to several specialty institutions that train artists, musicians, composers, architects, and actors, I have been exposed repeatedly to recognized artists in various fields who are beset by significant personality disturbance, and who struggle continuously to maintain supportive relationships, stave off addiction, and remain productive within their field.

But how exactly do we describe the characteristics of the art of artists with significant narcissistic pathology and impaired affect tolerance? What if an artist’s character structure acts not just as an impediment, but spurs him to create? What if this structure influences the subject and the affective qualities of his artwork, what if it communicates substantial doses of the artist’s underlying distress to the audience, and yet the resulting artwork is considered a masterpiece?

*Berlioz and Symphonie Fantastique as Exemplary of Such
"Intermediate" Artists*

Berlioz, a once-controversial composer whose life showed patterns of significant character disturbance, makes for a rich example of the narcissistic artist's psychological functioning. Using Berlioz's life and *Symphonie Fantastique* as guides, I will explore the results of the composer's management through art of what has been variously labeled *Seelenschmerz* ("psychic pain") (Freud 1917b, p. 158; see also Akhtar 2000, p. 230; Freud 1926, p. 171), narcissistic injury, and painful fluctuation of internal object representations. It is my position that the ongoing creation of artworks in this population acts as a kind of self-treatment for narcissistic injury and deficit, and that such artists are so impelled to assuage these hurts that the very structure of their works can become altered.

In artists with significant narcissistic pathology, the intensity of investment in the creative act may overwhelm the transitional nature of the artwork; that is, the artistic process may come to be unconsciously experienced as preferable to and more vital than real relationships, in a manner that is affectively distorted and primitive but not psychotic per se. Whereas Gediman (1975) observed that instances of the artist's "idealization of self-created works and self-created objects" might be regarded as "adaptive precursors" (p. 419) to fuller object relatedness, what if the artist's ongoing experience of the world is fragmented or overstimulated enough such that this idealization (and perhaps even sexualization) of the self-created artistic world extends for years, while there is a paucity of fuller relationships? What if the excess "stimulus hunger" (Gediman 1975, p. 418) noted in the child-to-become-artist—first alluded to in Greenacre's (1957) well-known essay—continues unabated into adulthood?

In analyzing Berlioz's creative journey with the *Symphonie Fantastique*, I will theorize how art produced for such purposes may contain added elements experienced as foreign to and disturbing for the audience. There can even be projection of unbearable affective material by which the artist consciously or unconsciously at-

tempts to excessively control or even debase his intended audience. The disturbed artist requires a distorted—and therefore less “acceptable” and less seamless—aesthetic disguise for the torrent of personally idiosyncratic and affectively unprocessed elements of his artwork, such that his increased experience of *Seelenschmerz* is induced in the audience.

This paper first explores the wild mix of talent, torture, and musical production that defined Berlioz’s life. After presenting a psychoanalytic formulation of his life, I will focus more closely on how his problems in self-regulation and self-pathology take root in the thematic material and musical form of *Symphonie Fantastique*.¹ Viewing the music through this psychoanalytic lens, I hope to demonstrate a fuller interpretation of it that is more closely aligned with the original mixed reception of both Berlioz the composer and the *Symphonie Fantastique*.

¹ It is particularly difficult to assess psychoanalytic meanings within symphonic music, given the dearth of more directly decipherable verbal material on which to base our hypotheses. (See Lockwood 2003, pp. 15–21, for a concise summary of this problem in relation to the study of Beethoven’s works.) Art, of course, is not the same as the treatment situation, and our diagnoses always bear the risk of reducing or diminishing other influences in an artist’s life in the quest to justify psychoanalytic theories; Feder (1990, p. xi), for one, warned against the tendency toward “pathophilia” in examining the lives of famous composers. The effort to make sense of the unconscious sources of a complex piece of music can potentially be full of errors.

For example, the character of a piece of music has often been shown *not* to correlate directly with the composer’s reigning affective state during specific periods of his life (see Harris 2001, pp. 20–22). A parallel epistemic problem is evident within music criticism in what has been called “essentialism”: demonstrating that music or art of a specific period must reflect “essential” properties of a particular culture or ideology.

Freud (1937) addressed the risk of committing similar errors of overinterpretation when delving into the unconscious of our patients; he found that reconstructions that did not “fit” the embedded structure tended to fall away on deeper scrutiny. My study of Berlioz and *Symphonie Fantastique* attempts to reduce the risk of a tautological reading by staying close to Berlioz’s abundant and especially self-revealing autobiographical material, and through an investigation that incorporates the formal and stylistic elements of the music itself.

On a final note, it is difficult, in describing Berlioz’s state while creating his feverish *Symphonie Fantastique*, to convey the breadth of his energetic mind or the genius that comes across in his autobiographical writings and sumptuous music.

This piece has become viewed in retrospect as a Romantic-era example of fervent expression and personal indulgence by the artist. This interpretation has resulted in a shift in how later audiences have viewed the work and has limited its emotional scope. It has transformed the wildly unpredictable fourth movement, *March to the Scaffold*, into merely a rousing circus, and the terrifying elements of the fifth movement, *The Witches' Sabbath*, into a musical ghost story. These later receptions of *Symphonie Fantastique* ignore the split-off pain, misery, and sadism expressed in the work. Psychoanalytic exploration of the more disturbed affective processing and primitive mechanisms within the creative process helps the *Symphonie Fantastique* regain its truly harrowing effect and unsettling nature.

TOWARD A FORMULATION OF THE COMPOSER'S PSYCHE: INTERNAL OBJECT RELATIONS AND NARCISSISTIC VULNERABILITY

Historical Perspectives

2003 marked the "Year of Berlioz," a celebration of the bicentenary of his birth. As many musicologists have pointed out, Berlioz is just now getting his due recognition, a century and a half after his most noted works were composed. Berlioz is known now as one of the seminal figures in nineteenth-century Romantic music. His most famous works include the *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Romeo et Juliet*, *Le Damnation de Faust*, *Harold en Italie*, and *Les Troyens*. Today he is esteemed for his belief in the expressive and dramatic within music. His expansion of the harmonic medium (i.e., which harmonies can acceptably be used); his introduction of longer, cyclical themes throughout musical works; and his varied, expanded possibilities of instrumentation (once labeled his "emancipation of timbre" [Dalhaus 1989]) are his primary legacies. More than a composer, Berlioz was also a prolific writer and critic. He railed against what he considered poor musicianship and

conducting skills, as well as the stultifying pre-Romantic musical culture in which certain repetitive musical forms, such as the formulaic opera arias of his day, were revered.

Berlioz's reception by the musical establishment was initially marked by controversy. Though he went on to directly influence such composers as Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Bizet, Mahler, and Stravinsky, the musical cognoscenti of both France and Germany have had problems with his music; both during his lifetime and afterward, it was scorned by the French system as too emotionally expressive to be good art, and the composer was thus labeled "a subverter of artistic law and order" (Cairns 1999, p. xxii). Ironically, more modernist scholars rejected Berlioz's music as exhibiting elements that were too old-fashioned, too much of a nod toward the classical past. "Real progress," to the modernist critics, was exemplified not by Berlioz's "daguerreotype charm" (Aaron Copland quoted in Cone 1971, p. 300), but by Wagner's groundbreaking harmonic and organizational directions of the 1850s, evident in his *Tristan und Isolde*.

There is also something about Berlioz's music that has felt upsetting to all camps. Berlioz's most detailed biographer, David Cairns (1999), summarized what disturbs even modern listeners about his music. It is especially

. . . its sense of violence: violence barely contained and sometimes bursting out with frightening force . . . "the smell of carnage that rises from some of his scores" and his ability to "generate terror." There is in his music, especially the music of his youth, an electrical atmosphere by which some people are unsettled as by certain kinds of weather. [p. xxii]

In trying to stay as close as possible to the inner life of Berlioz, I have utilized as my main sources in this regard his memoirs and letters. Berlioz published the final draft of his lengthy *Memoirs of Hector Berlioz* near the end of his life in 1865; it was primarily a compilation of previously written materials, such as observations and correspondence (Berlioz 1865, p. 480). It thus offers a rich

string of relatively experience-near recollections and promptings. Materials already in print by 1848 make up four-fifths of this publication.

I summarize my psychoanalytic reading of Berlioz by pointing out mainly early maternal and paternal influences that seem to express themselves in later love relationships and professional activities. This summary is not meant to be comprehensive, nor to diminish other important influences on Berlioz's life and music, such as sibling relationships and the politico-musical landscape of his era; clearly, Berlioz's aesthetic could not help but be shaped by these factors as well.

Maternal and Paternal Influences

There is little historical fact available concerning Berlioz's early childhood. His *Memoirs* do not contain any sort of detailed account of his life before the age of twelve. Yet Berlioz's later life patterns of attachment suggest that he must have missed an early and sustained experience of maternal investment or empathy.

Several examples point to a preoedipal vulnerability. In 1828, Berlioz made an aborted suicide attempt following an initial rebuff by a woman whom he wished to marry. He was afflicted on and off by what he labeled his "black philosophy" (Berlioz 1865, p. 305)—an irritable, pessimistic, withdrawn state in which he felt that no one properly appreciated him; he had difficulty interacting with others during these periods.

Despite his romantic-sounding yearnings and idealizations of women, Berlioz could never receive quite enough attention, or the right kind of attention, within a sustained relationship. His eventual marriage to the actress Harriet Smithson, who inspired the *Symphonie Fantastique*, was a failure; she died crippled, alcoholic, and abandoned by him, as he traveled frequently and eventually turned to a mistress for companionship.

We do know of Berlioz's mother that she was a dogmatically religious woman who suffered from "gastritis" attacks. Letters from Berlioz's mother reveal complaints about her "'eternal gastritis,'

her husband's deafness and inaccessibility, Hector's mad ideas . . . and the general unsatisfactoriness of the world" (Cairns 1999, p. 14). In contrast, Berlioz's father appears to have been agnostic and multitalented, and he home-schooled his son Hector in the classics as well as in music (Cairns 1999, pp. 3-37).

Berlioz showed again and again throughout his life that he was seeking an all-encompassing romantic love to relieve his suffering. He described being smitten with painful passions for several women. As a boy of twelve, he was too scared to approach Estelle Fournier, an 18-year-old whom he encountered in a resort town. The first woman he attempted to marry was Camille Moke, but, after learning of her affairs, he nearly acted out intense murderous and suicidal fantasies about her, eventually forcing him to flee the country. Harriet Smithson, most famously, was the woman he finally won over in 1832, after maneuvering her attendance at a performance of his two-part composition, *A Hero's Life* (which contains *Symphonie Fantastique*). Finally, there was Marie Recio, the mistress he turned to after Smithson lost her acting abilities and physical health.

The most accentuated example of this pattern was Berlioz's primarily unidirectional relationship with Estelle Fournier, the 18-year-old woman with whom he became enamored at age twelve, who returned to his mind again and again in periods of hurt. It may be tempting to consider some of Berlioz's urgent, starry-eyed flourishes as reflecting Romantic-era expressiveness, but his harrowing, desperate letters to Estelle when he was in his sixties have an affective resonance far more painful and depressing than buoyant.

Berlioz's pleas for Estelle's love come into his narrative at times when he needs a replacement for other caretaking female objects who have left his life, as with the deaths of his lover Marie, his sister Nanci, and his sister Adele. His writings explicitly show the heart-wrenching extent of his yearning and his needs. We see how much he urgently requires some literal piece of Estelle's physical presence in order to call up an internal sensation of comfort and hopefulness. For example, in 1864, at the age of sixty-one, in a fit

of despair, Berlioz makes the pilgrimage to Meylan, where he first caught sight of Estelle on a hilltop when he was twelve, in order to assuage his mood. "Seldom have I been more dreadfully depressed," he declares (Berlioz 1865, p. 510). He is in declining health, suffering from "intestinal neuralgia," finds little acceptance in Paris, and is growing increasingly pessimistic. The memory of Estelle as savior, previously distant, floods back into his consciousness:

Hitherto I had contented myself with murmuring, in a low voice, "Estelle! Estelle! Estelle!" but now, overwhelmed by emotion, I fell to the ground, and lay there for a long time, listening with a mortal sadness to the echoes in my brain which at each pulsation of the arteries seemed to say: The past! the past! Time! Never! never! . . . never! I arose, I snatched a stone from the tower wall which must have seen *her*, which perhaps *she* had touched . . . my feet stand where she must have stood! . . . I fill the space once occupied by her lovely form. I bear away a tiny fragment from my granite altar . . . There is a cherry tree. . . . I take a piece of the bark; I embrace the trunk, and press it convulsively to my heart! [Berlioz 1865, p. 512, italics in original]

Berlioz's need here is for literal holding, physical reassurance for his uncontrolled agitation, something to assuage the emptiness that he describes again and again as enveloping his soul. At sixty-two, after burning Estelle's letters of rejection at her own request, Berlioz writes back to her that he has nevertheless held onto and treasured the envelopes that contained the letters.

Berlioz himself notes the impossibility of achieving any real relief from his lovesickness by reuniting with the lost figure of his youth, but, without another source of comfort, he cannot stop himself. He relates:

The same memories and regrets, the same yearning towards the past, the same pitiable eagerness to retain the ever-flying present, the same useless struggle with time, the same madness in attempting to realize the impossible, *the same imperative craving for boundless affection*. How should I

not repeat myself? [Berlioz 1865, pp. 513-514, initial italics added]

He knows on one level that Estelle is not a figure who can truly appreciate him or with whom he can have a mutually giving relationship. He exclaims: "My whole soul went out to the aged, saddened, and obscure woman, to whom art was unknown, as it had ever done, ever will do to my dying day" (p. 518).

To appreciate how shocking Berlioz's entreaties to Estelle are, witness her own daughter's admonishment to Berlioz at one point to stop with his letters and attempts to visit: "You frighten her," she scolds him (Berlioz 1865, p. 526). In fact, if one reads the Estelle letters simultaneously with Berlioz's later-life accounts of despair over the future of his music and his physical complaints, one is left with the image not so much of an effusive romantic heart, but more of a lonely, epistolary stalker.

The importance for Berlioz is that his expression of love be stated and registered. Regarding Estelle's cold replies, he comments:

My sky is not without its star, and with moistened eyes I watch it beaming on me from afar. True, she does not love me; why, indeed should she? But she might have remained in total ignorance of me, and now she knows that I adore her. [1865, p. 530]

Berlioz himself notices that it is the reception and creation of music is that begins to assuage the painful states to which he is subject. Music is the soothing, split-off area of goodness and solidity where his overwrought emotions can be properly registered, as he indicates in a letter of 1830:

I suffer so much that if I did not contain myself I should be shouting and rolling on the ground. I have found only one way of completely satisfying this immense appetite for emotion, and that's music. Without it I could certainly not survive. [Berlioz quoted in Macdonald 1995, p. 65]

This calls to mind Oremland's (1998) description of creativity and the image of the mother:

She is that mysterious outside-yet-inside location where wrongs are made right, pain is made to disappear, and the incomprehensible made comprehensible . . . whose kiss makes it better and under whose protective aegis new adventures can be embarked and the most fear-laden areas of thought explored. [p. 88]

Berlioz's residual need for mirroring, "to gain what is most precious for an artist, the approval of those capable of appreciating him" (Berlioz quoted in Macdonald 1995, p. 53), is vital for organizing what are periods of mental and physical fragmentation for him.

Berlioz's father is often described retrospectively in glowing terms throughout his writings. However, a close reading of their interactions, as well as the realization of what is curiously missing in Berlioz's depictions, allows us to fill in the thwarted emotional tenor of their relationship. Louis Berlioz, Hector's father, was a doctor; in home-schooling his son, he urged him to pursue a career in medicine, with which Hector at first complied. Once Hector switched his career plan to that of composer, however, he used much of his interactions with his father to try to convince him that he would be a talented composer and eventually able to support himself. His father seemed to remain obstinate in his lack of support for many years, perhaps disappointed that his son did not follow in his own footsteps.

Berlioz as a young man touchingly entreats his father to support him, and tries to hold back his bitterness at his father's rebuffs:

It seems, dear papa, as though I shall not be able to change your mind about me, so I am set to be a bad son, a bad brother and an idiot, a man unworthy of the regard of reasonable people! [Berlioz quoted in Macdonald 1995, p. 20]

Louis Berlioz remains concerned mostly with his own and his son's finances (see, e.g., Cairns 1999, pp. 119-123). A statement about their relationship by his father, quoted in Berlioz's sister

Nanci's diary from 1824, is illuminating: "My childhood was not happy, my youth was very stormy, and now the son who was to have been my consolation is destroying the happiness I might have had" (Cairns 1999, p. 158). Between 1832 and 1847, during the time of his major successes, Berlioz did not visit his father once (Berlioz 1865, p. 456). Sadly, his father "died without having heard a single note of my music," wrote Berlioz (1865, p. 458), despite repeated invitations to do so.

In the young Berlioz's mind during his formative musical years were concerns about judgment by fathers. His early opera *Les Francs-Juges* was to become the basis for the fourth movement of *Symphonie Fantastique*, in which a harsh, secret court and an evil villain act cruelly in condemning their victims.

Berlioz's early compositional efforts were seen by the Paris Conservatory as overtly rebellious. His first entry for the coveted *Prix de Rome* was rejected because it was considered unplayable either as a piano transcription or by an orchestra. Berlioz, unable to see his own part in making his entry provocative, recounted with irony what one judge of the competition told him:

"And then, when I saw these bizarre forms, this hatred for everything conventional, I couldn't help saying to my colleagues . . . that this young man with ideas like that, who writes in such a manner, MUST DESPISE US FROM THE BOTTOM OF HIS HEART. You are a volcanic being, my dear Berlioz, and you must not write for yourself; not everyone is made of the same metal." [Macdonald 1995, p. 57, capitalization in original]

This was not to be the last time in Berlioz's life in which his expansion of what was "allowed" musically would upset or offend his critics. It is only with twenty-first-century hindsight that it becomes easy to track his musical demands and identify them as eventually influential to future composers.

A final, more hopeful paternal image in Berlioz's mind, present throughout his life, was that of Shakespeare, who was cited more than twenty times in Berlioz's *Memoirs*. Berlioz was initially enam-

ored with the actress Harriet Smithson in her Shakespearean roles as Ophelia, Juliet, and Desdemona. Berlioz seemed to be attracted to her for her involvement with Shakespeare, as much as for her fulfillment of the exciting role of forbidden object of desire in these plays. In Shakespeare, Berlioz saw aspects of his own creative imagination and imagines an ideal father-son bond between two great artists.

Regarding his own musical composition *Romeo and Juliet*, Berlioz ecstatically relays:

How vigorously I struck out in that grand sea of poetry caressed by the playful breeze of fancy, beneath the hot rays of that sun of love which Shakespeare kindled, always confident of my power to reach the marvelous island where stands the temple of true art. [1865, p. 230]

Shakespeare as a dramatist of passion is comforting to Berlioz as an alternative father who can perceive his unique artistic/musical imperatives. Berlioz can parallel Shakespeare's craft with the use of his music as an enlivening internal experience. While later reminiscing about the death of his wife, Berlioz, not coincidentally, invokes Shakespeare as the ultimate comforting figure, in lieu of Christ (who would have been more associated with Berlioz's religious mother):

Shakespeare, Shakespeare! where art thou? He alone, of all intelligent beings, could have understood me . . . have understood us both. He alone could have looked with pity on two poor artists, at once loving and lacerating each other. Shakespeare, the true man, if he is still in existence, must know how to succor the wretched. He is our father, our father in heaven—if there be a heaven. An almighty being, wrapped in his infinite indifference, is an atrocious absurdity. Shakespeare alone is the good God to the soul of the artist. Receive us into thy bosom, O father, and hide us there. [1865, pp. 468-469]

In the concluding lines of the final version of his *Memoirs*, Berlioz turns again to Shakespeare to describe his sense of despair,

darkly citing Macbeth's "walking shadow" speech. He seems to be saying that if only he could have had a figure who shared and withstood his intense moods and grand visions, he might have been significantly more comforted throughout his life. He invokes memories of his heroes Virgil, Gluck, and Beethoven, but ends his *Memoirs* with a comment about his need for the Bard: "Shakespeare, who perhaps might have loved me. (Nevertheless, I am really inconsolable)" (1865, p. 530).

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE: THE MUSIC, BERLIOZ'S DYNAMICS, AND THE SYMPHONY'S RECEPTION HISTORY

*How the Music of Symphonie Fantastique Illuminates Berlioz's
Dynamics*²

Symphonie Fantastique was originally entitled "Episode from the Life of an Artist (grand fantastic symphony in five parts)." The stress is thus on the subject of the work, not its musical form. Berlioz provided a controversial "Program,"³ a descriptive text that explains the work's dramatic underpinnings in detail. This program offers Berlioz's own overview of the music:

A young musician of unhealthily sensitive nature and endowed with a vivid imagination has poisoned himself with opium in a paroxysm of love-sick despair. The narcotic dose he had taken was too weak to cause death but it has thrown him into a long sleep accompanied by the most extraordinary visions. In this condition his sensations, his

² I again want to be clear that, however we may view the motivations behind, and track the reception of, the *Symphonie Fantastique*, it stands as a masterpiece of expression. Within it, Berlioz was able to communicate universally applicable musical and dramatic statements about the vicissitudes of romantic love—even as we may simultaneously note how reflections of his personal psychology map themselves onto the music.

³ A full version of what has been regarded as the standard "Program" (Berlioz 1830) to the *Symphonie Fantastique* is included in an appendix to this article, pp. 472-474.

feelings and his memories find utterance in his sick brain in the form of musical imagery. [Berlioz 1830, p. v]

Of note is Berlioz's clearly autobiographical and self-critical description of an "unhealthily sensitive nature" and "sick brain." Berlioz has already pointed to the important link to be made between his emotional distress and its "utterance" within the music. He referred to the symphony as his cure from the malaise that enveloped him (Cairns 1999).

Berlioz unashamedly structured the piece in the form of a complex, multi-episodic dream. In a letter describing the creation of the *Symphonie Fantastique* (Cone 1971), he revealed that, when initially composed, the first three movements were not part of a dream, but simply descriptions of an artist who is plagued by "a vivid imagination" and tormented by his obsession with the woman of his dreams: "Whenever she appears in his mind's eye it is accompanied by a musical thought in whose character he finds a grace and nobility akin to the attributes of his beloved. This double obsession (*idée fixe*) pursues him incessantly" (Berlioz quoted in Cone 1971, p. 8). So, in the original conception of the *Symphonie Fantastique*, the protagonist overdoses and then describes his visions only *after* the first three movements.

Here it is interesting to recall Freud's notion from *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) that the dream within the dream—or, in this case, the dream within the musical fantasy work—is an unconscious means of trying to cloak the more conflicted underlying wishes contained in the embedded dream within the guise of its being only an "innocent" reverie. The last two movements constitute the real "dream within the dream" of the *Symphonie Fantastique*.⁴

The Part I (Movements 1–3) Program of *Symphonie Fantastique*, then, lays out an apt tableau of Berlioz's reigning affective

⁴ I believe that it is here in the final two movements, which Berlioz identified as forming a unit, where he works on the more disguised and disavowed aspects of his painful situation. For this reason, I will devote more attention to the formal structures of these last movements.

states. In it the narrator reports the “uneasy and nervous condition of his mind, of somber longings, of depression and joyous elation without any recognizable cause,” which he experienced before the beloved one appeared to him, followed by the “ardent love with which she suddenly inspired him,” and, finally, the “almost insane anxiety of mind, and his raging jealousy, of his re-awakening love” (Berlioz 1830, p. v).

Compare this state to that of Berlioz after he again meets Estelle Fournier late in his life, and she asks not to see him in person again:

My wretched heart bleeds as though it had been wounded. I ask myself the reason, and this is what I find: *It is absence*; it is that *I saw too little of you*, that I did not say a quarter of what I had to say, and that I went away almost as though there were to be an eternal separation between us Remember that *I have loved you for forty-nine years, that I have loved you from childhood*. [Berlioz 1865, p. 520, italics added]

Thus, the theme of maternal longing, both soothing and sexually charged, makes its appearance in the introductory remarks of *Symphonie Fantastique* and will be reworked throughout the piece.

A striking formal characteristic of Part I is Berlioz’s use of what he called his *idée fixe*, the French term for *obsession*. Musically, it is a melody that appears in the beginning, then reappears and disappears throughout the symphony. It is explicitly the hero’s reminiscence of his beloved. The use of such a literally repeated theme evoking particular characters in a musical drama predates Wagner’s similar use of this leitmotif in his Ring cycle operas by at least fifteen years. Thus, this element of connection among movements helped expand the architecture of Classical-period symphonic form.

The *idée fixe* in *Symphonie Fantastique* is a drawn-out melody that contains a built-in aspect of tension: the chromatic opposition of A-flat versus A-natural, which lends it an unresolved, disquieting affect. Its unusual, asymmetrical, fifteen-measure length (instead of the typical multiple of four or eight bars) also distorts its potential beauty as a melody. This distortion appropriately reflects

Berlioz's complex feelings toward the "beloved," a figure who will turn out to be both his imagined savior and his tormentor.

The program continues with descriptions of the ball and the country scene of the second and third movements. Berlioz's hero feels calm at the sight of the scenery, but is disturbed by thoughts of his beloved, which cause "a tightening in his heart, painful presentiments . . . What if she were deceiving him? One of the shepherds takes up his simple tune again, the other, an offstage oboe, no longer answers . . . loneliness . . . silence" (1830, p. v). Here we see continued expressions of the cravings for a calming figure that his beloved induced in him earlier.

Pastoral themes in music have long been associated with childhood innocence, as well as veiled with homoerotic love (Harris 2001, pp. 133-170). But this is no ordinary pastorella with a settling resolution; although the hero at first experiences a calm while fantasizing that he will have a unity with his beloved, this is followed by unsettling, unresolved, lower-register tones. What these forebodings clue him in to is not the romantic prize, but the "loneliness . . . silence" described in the program (and by the musical form). Berlioz's latent experience of rejection is thus revealed, rather than what is most manifest: the prospect of a relieving reunion.

Berlioz musically encoded this disturbing affect in two ways: in the timbres ("sound qualities") and in the structure, by adding an uncharacteristic coda to the third movement. He later described the affect of this movement as embodied within the timbre of the English horn, which was not in popular use at this time. Berlioz (1843) described the scene as follows:

. . . like the voice of a youth replying to a girl in a pastoral dialogue . . . The mood of absence and oblivion, of sorrowful loneliness, which arises in the soul of many a listener at the recurrence of this melancholy tune, would be far less poignant if it were played by another instrument. [p. 185]

Also of significance, Berlioz very strikingly grafted onto the relatively tight and straightforward aria structure (ABA) of the third

movement a carefully constructed coda that contains the *idée fixe* theme followed by timpani, played shockingly in minor. Such instrumentation was unheard of at the time, as was the sudden addition to a pastorale, with its usually reassuring, “open” harmonies, of such a brooding ending. The unexpected timpani passage presages what is to come: the dark fourth and fifth movements, which are Berlioz’s replies to an idealized beloved whom it seems he can never really hold on to.

Part II, “the dream within a dream,” begins with the fourth movement, *March to the Scaffold*.⁵ The hero’s public procession to his execution for “dreaming” that he has killed his beloved shows the other side of Berlioz’s depressions, closer to his self-described periods of irritability and depression, labeled in his *Memoirs* as the “black philosophy” (1865, p. 305). Instead of detailing the absence of the beloved, as the third movement has just done, the music focuses on rage and punishment—on the narrator himself, a publicly debased figure being led “to the stake.”

It is known that Berlioz had previously composed the music for the *March to the Scaffold*—arguably in 1825, for his piece *Les Francs-Juges*—and that he apparently made few changes except to graft the theme of the beloved (*idée fixe*) onto the penultimate measures of the preexisting music. The *idée fixe* theme is then abruptly cut off by the jarring drum roll and final chords that signify the hero’s demise by a “death blow.” (Even the rolling head is depicted in grim musical form by a pizzicato rendition of low, divided strings performing a descending G minor arpeggio.)

It is as if Berlioz were attempting to dismiss from his mind the *idée fixe*, his mental representation of the hoped-for ecstasy and recurrent agony that woman/mother stirs in him. Berlioz chooses his younger, less polished *Francs-Juges* music for this part of his narrative because it reflects a cracklingly intense and unsettled affective picture. The music of this movement is indeed jarring, not

⁵ The French title is “*Marche au Supplice*.” *Supplice* is usually translated as *scaffold* or *stake*, indicating the place where a public execution will occur. The word also means *torture* or *torment* and has implications of causing another or oneself to suffer, as in the phrase *être au supplice*—“to be in agony.”

at all that of a typical march with a predictable structure and a prescribed harmonic formula. It contains blaring alternations of tritone-related chords (the juxtaposition of two chords separated by the most harmonically distant, clashing interval possible), as well as volatile *subito* dynamic markings (suddenly applied changes in volume).

Berlioz may also be displaying another aspect of his inner life in this movement, one related to the role his father plays. Remember that preceding the *March to the Scaffold* was the expression of his longings for his beloved, the cooing comforts of a mother: "the soft whisperings of the trees stirred by the zephyr-wind, some prospects of hope All these sensations unite to part of a long unknown repose in his heart" (Berlioz 1830, p. v). Then the other shepherd "answers him no more." It is fitting to note that the next movement concerns his punishment by a third party as he is led to a public execution. So, while—explicitly—Berlioz's overly intense longings have led to the murder of the beloved, some sort of substitute structure or accompaniment is necessary to replace that lost relationship; this role is filled by the presence of a condemning father.

As seen in his real-life struggles with men, Berlioz is often on the edge of provoking powerful men to attack him, and themes of punishing men are implicit in his fourth-movement narrative, filled as it is with images of soldiers marching him to a guillotine whose very fall is depicted in the music. Of note, the punishment depicted in this movement is not shown in bleak musical terms, but in a way that might be described as "frenzied"—indeed, it would not be unreasonable to label it as sexualized: the music is "somber and wild," with "brilliant outbursts," as described in the program. I suggest that, for Berlioz, the damaging sallies with men may have helped fill an emptiness that his ultimately disappointing relations with women failed to satisfy.

So far in the music, we have been shown idealization, longing, desire, and a punishing response, but the intrapsychic narrative—what so consumed Berlioz around his feelings for Harriet Smithson and partly motivated the symphony—is not complete. The *idée*

fixe and what it represents, the reflection of an essential state with which Berlioz emotionally grapples, cannot be so easily killed off. His struggle with rage and emptiness, ever affecting his relationships in life as counterweights to his inventive music-making, are expressed in the symphony's fifth movement. In this final movement, *The Witches' Sabbath* details the degradation of the beloved, who reappears at the protagonist's hellish funeral as a nymphomaniac in a macabre orgy. Her music has become "mean, trivial, and grotesque," her theme inaugurated by a cackling E-flat clarinet. The "monsters" of the composer's unconscious here take literal form in the program—and, evocatively, in the music: "he is surrounded by horrible spirits, amidst sorcerers and monsters" (Berlioz 1830, p. vi). *Con legno*⁶ string playing reflects the rattling of bones. The parodic form of the music becomes a way for the composer to hide his suffering with burlesque trappings.

Turning now to the musical structure of the final movement, we are first introduced to an *idée fixe*-derived musical theme, which I will label here the "maternal" theme. It becomes distorted as the hero discovers his beloved has come to preside over his funeral/orgy; there is a mocking, tormenting quality to it. The theme is transformed into a dance form—a round—as the hero is forced to passively watch his beloved participate in the celebration with demon/sorcerer fathers. The round is an evocative final choice of musical form with which to encapsulate his feelings toward his beloved/maternal image: it is a canon form, which has dizzying and never-ending qualities as it repeats onto itself, holding back melodic resolution.

To encapsulate his terror and to represent a punishing paternal force, Berlioz introduces the *Dies Irae* ("Days of Wrath") theme in the low brass—a solemn, frightening formula associated with hundreds of years of church liturgy, used to evoke death and final judgment. In what seems to be a climax to the symphony, the two themes then combine contrapuntally in a bacchanalia of notes.

⁶ Berlioz himself (1843) explained the use of the *con legno* string technique: "In a symphonic work where the terrible is combined with the grotesque, the back of the bow has been used to strike the strings" (p. 21).

That is, instead of one melody being supported by an underlying harmony, both melodies play simultaneously. Berlioz appears to be depicting a deeply distressing image of his early life: after being publicly executed for losing control and killing the source of his heart's content, he is forced to helplessly watch his beloved (his mother) fornicate with wild demonic figures, as sounds of his emotionally depriving father also fill the air.

The Witches' Sabbath mines infantile sources presented on the very surface of the musical structure. In it, we witness Berlioz's autobiographical character, the "young musician," surrounded by powerful, scary figures, helpless and forced to passively watch the spectacle around him. This seems consistent with primal scene-derived material. His noble beloved is transformed into a grotesque, sexually depraved creature as the whirling sounds of the orchestra and her devil-may-care round dance theme take hold, signaling his torment. The climactic, polyphonic merger of the two themes suggests intercourse between his parents, with Berlioz forced to watch as a helpless outsider.

Reconstructed primal scenes presented by primitive personalities in psychoanalytic work have previously been described. Ogden (1993) demonstrated that the form of the primal scene in these personalities tends to reflect the extent of their pathology, with more primitive personalities typically depicting scenes of frightened, drained, or vicious sexual partners. Berlioz's scene, appropriately, was considered cacophonous by some contemporary listeners, and, as we shall see, it is without a thorough emotional resolution of its underlying thematic material.

In a similar vein, Britton (1988), describing the primitive Oedipus, stated:

In the child already menaced by any enlargement of his knowledge of his mother because of her existing precarious status in his mind, the further threat of acknowledging her relationship to father is felt to spell disaster. The rage and hostility that would be aroused by that discovery is felt to threaten his belief in a world where good objects can exist. The hostile force that was thought to attack his

original link with the mother is now equated with the Oedipal father, and the link with the mother is felt to reconstitute her as the nonreceptive deadly mother . . . an idea of the primal scene is followed by panic attacks and imminent death. [p. 248]

The last two movements of *Symphonie Fantastique* may reflect such a fantasied primal scene, with “expectations of an endlessly humiliating exposure to parental triumphalism or a disastrous version of parental intercourse. The latter is perceived as horrific, sado-masochistic, or murderous intercourse, or as depressive images of a ruined couple in a ruined world” (Britton 1988, p. 252).

Interestingly, what Berlioz leaves out of his description in the program is how the symphony resolves these combined musical/psychological themes with a second, relatively sudden, coda-like gesture. I propose that the final section of the fifth movement, which so captivates audiences with its flashiness, confirms Berlioz’s use of the art of music as a container and vehicle for his disavowed affects and disturbing internal object representations. The *Dies Irae* theme returns in its loudest and most terrifying form, accompanied by roiling pianissimo-to-fortissimo rolls in the timpani. This “paternal” theme, via the compositional technique of reduction, doubles in tempo twice, threatening to careen out of control.

Suddenly, a carnival-like theme interrupts and takes over. The loud bass, which earlier expressed the *Dies Irae* paternally derived theme, soon shifts into the loud but clichéd trombone notes of a rollicking, C major cadence. Upper register *idée fixe*-derived notes become indistinct in a blur of piercing, dizzying triplet arpeggios played by the whole orchestra, and the music explodes in a final chord with double timpani and cymbal rolls. *It is as if Berlioz were showing that the only antidote to his terrifying unconscious depictions is the intercession of an established, steadying musical form.*

Let us pause for a moment to examine the details of this coda. The menacing *Dies Irae* (paternal) theme is interrupted by two sustained, preparatory chords (known as I 6/4 and V chords), marking a precipitous return to the “home” key of the symphony, C. The barest outlines of the *idée fixe* linger, hidden in the string

parts (as analyzed in Cone 1971), and there is one more striking pause on what is known as a “III flat” chord, associated with the *idée fixe*’s harmony, in a shocking moment that suspends the symphony for twelve beats in a “foreign”-sounding key. The symphony rolls over these last reminders of the *idée fixe* theme (as well as the recently heard paternal theme) by again heading directly from this *idée fixe*-associated chord to another group of standard preparatory chords and a “final cadence” in the key of C major.

Cadences in music are prearranged musical devices that firmly establish a key. They are points around which the harmony of a given section is organized and, therefore, serve to bookend sections of a piece of music. They are among the most basic and universal of musical structures. All works of this era contain final cadences at the end of the work, but, most of the time, these final cadences are assiduously prepared for, both thematically and harmonically. Berlioz explodes and scatters—and, in a certain manner, contains—his unbearable feelings within the unremitting interruption of the preparatory chords and loud, final tonic cadence. Instead of the torturous, tension-filled, chromatic upward movement of the *idée fixe* melody, his final cadence features a quickly resolving, descending motif in the lower-register instruments, contained between the inevitable, powerful alternation of tonic and dominant bass notes, which mark the end of a symphony. It is as if only within an especially fixed musical form can Berlioz’s unrelenting passion for maternal comfort—a passion that is ever missing—be tamed, and only then can the loud bass theme representing his father’s rebuffs be commandeered.

On the surface, this surprise ending and over-the-top instrumentation can sound exciting to the audience. In the victorious fortissimo of a final, major-key cadence, following a long symphony, the horror of what has come before can be transformed and remembered differently. What was truly disturbing and frightening in the music—especially in *The Witches’ Sabbath*, with its tolling bells and demons—might now be reframed as a set of Halloween-like and merely spooky gestures. Indeed, these programmatic elements of *Symphonie Fantastique* are often celebrated: its abilities

to evoke shepherds, or rattling bones, or church cemetery bells. In focusing on these aspects, the audience subtracts the symphony's harrowing nature and disavows more disturbing parts of what Berlioz has been communicating. It was "just" a reverie, akin to the subject's attempts at disguising the underlying wish in the dream within a dream—not an account of Berlioz's enduring childhood pain, freshly encapsulated and delivered to the audience.

We might summarize that Berlioz's underlying distress has, in fact, been served up to the audience in full force, and the artistic maneuvers (e.g., forceful instrumentation and abrupt cadences) that were necessary to contain these feelings—to make the distress less overwhelming to Berlioz himself—also needed to be extreme.

The Reception History of Symphonie Fantastique

Music has specially established and traceable conventions at any given time, delimiting what the composer may use as ingredients to express himself and still stay within a standard frame of reference. In Berlioz's time (and in, for example, Bach's time as well), specific harmonic formulae and ways of organizing themes were expected. If an artist is both skilled *and* daring enough to imbue a work with enough acceptable elements, *plus* include the right dose of surprising or unacceptable elements, the piece can be accepted publicly as "original," and can still coexist dialogically as a springboard for future artworks.

In the *Symphonie Fantastique*, the surprising elements included the shocking publication of the program before its premiere, the five-movement structure of the symphony (four movements would be expected), the dissonant harmonies of the last two movements, and the increased range of instrumentation in the orchestra. This exaggerated instrumentation included incorporation of the rarely used English horn, as well as the ophicleide (an outmoded tuba-like instrument), the infrequently heard cornet, and an oversized percussion section. The composer's written directions in the score demanded shrieking timbres and other quite particular sound effects. Most shocking of all for the time period might have been the

composer's self-indulgence of writing such an explicitly autobiographical piece of program music at all.

Berlioz pushed the boundaries of what could be used for expression in the *Symphonie Fantastique* to the edge of what was acceptable then—and much later as well. A noted contemporaneous critic, François-Joseph Fetis, demonstrated one pole of the response to Berlioz's edginess in a review of the première:⁷

The audience thought it was having a nightmare during the performance The fifth part, the Dreams of a Witches' Sabbath, mingles the trivial, the grotesque and the barbarous; it is a saturnalia of noise and not of music. The pen falls from my hand! [Cone 1971, p. 220]

Schumann, in another famous review of the *Symphonie Fantastique*, captured what is both disturbing and intriguing about it:

After having gone through the Berlioz symphony countless times, at first dumbfounded, then shocked, and at last struck with wonderment, I . . . will depict the composer to you as I have come to know him, in his weaknesses and virtues, in his vulgarity and his nobility, in his destructive anger and his love. For I know what he has produced cannot be called a work of art, any more than Nature itself without human cultivation, or passion without restraint of higher moral force. [Cone 1971, pp. 222-223]

Symphonie Fantastique has been tamed in its later reception. With the passage of time, we can track the downstream effects of pieces like the *Symphonie Fantastique* on the enlargement of the personal realm within music. What a fresh review of Berlioz's dynamics and exigencies in writing *Symphonie Fantastique* reminds us, though, is how extreme his idiom was at the time. When an artist

⁷ We need to be careful not to place too much weight on initial historical reactions to important works of art, as their originality is often difficult for contemporary critics to appreciate, and they can engender negative reviews simply due to their originality. However, the *Symphonie Fantastique* elicited a particularly zealous mix of fascination and disgust that, I hope to demonstrate, was derived partly from Berlioz's character and its effect on the *Symphonie Fantastique*.

senses that the usual parental and cultural response will not hold his situation, his frame is altered in a desperate attempt to have his situation held—just as a more fragmented, desperate patient might pressure the psychoanalytic frame. This sort of manhandling of the frame evokes a strong reaction—and not merely a conscious one based on the novelty of the technical maneuvers, but also in the unconscious of the audience members. I would like to suggest that early listeners were provoked by Berlioz's underlying affects and by unstated demands that they participate in the containment of his distress.

It is disgust that pervades many nineteenth-century reviews of Berlioz's music and of Berlioz as a person. Felix Mendelssohn fumed in 1831:

Berlioz is a freak, without a spark of talent, fumbling about in the darkness and imagining himself to be the creator of a new world This desperation in the presence of women, this assumption of genius in capital letters, black on white, is insupportable to me, and if he were not a Frenchman, with whom life is always agreeable, and who is always interesting, I could not endure him any longer. [Mendelssohn quoted in Berlioz 1865, p. 124]

And Mendelssohn, after hearing *Symphonie Fantastique* and perhaps attempting to distance himself from the emotions stirred up by Berlioz's music, writes scathingly in a letter *to his own mother*:

How utterly loathsome all this is to me . . . to see one's most cherished ideas debased and expressed in perverted caricatures would enrage anyone. And yet this is only the program. The execution [the music] is still more miserable: nowhere a spark, no warmth, utter foolishness, contrived passion represented through every possible exaggerated orchestral means . . . used to express nothing but indifferent drivel, mere grunting, shouting, screaming back and forth. And when you see the composer himself . . . unable to listen to any outside voice, since he wishes to follow only his inner inspiration, when you see how keenly and correctly he evaluates and recognizes everything, yet is in

complete darkness about himself—it is unspeakably dreadful, and I cannot express how deeply the sight of him depresses me. [Mendelssohn quoted in Nichols 1997, pp. 85-86]

Richard Wagner, in another famous essay, his own narcissism not far away, picks up on Berlioz's urgent need to engage his audience in the immediacy of his feelings:

Everything is monstrous, bold, but endlessly painful The first movement of Beethoven's Fifth would seem an act of pure kindness to me after the *Symphonie Fantastique* It is unfortunate Berlioz seems to enjoy his isolation and stubbornly tries to maintain it. He has no friend whom he considers worthy of asking for advice, or of whom he would allow to point out this or that defect in his work. [Wagner quoted in Cone 1971, pp. 284-287]

Even seventy-five years after *Symphonie Fantastique* was first performed, Berlioz retained controversy. Confirming his musical excesses, Claude Debussy commented:

Because of his concern with color and curiosities, Berlioz was immediately adopted by painters Professional musicians are still horrified by his harmonic "liberties" (which they call "awkwardnesses"), and by his "go-to-hell" forms. Is this the reason that his influence on modern music is practically nil? And that he will remain essentially unique? [Debussy quoted in Wright 2000, p. 265]

DISCUSSION

Considering Prior Models of Creativity

With *Leonardo*, Freud (1910) began a contemplation on how the driving force ("*il primo motore*," p. 74)—specifically, the libidinal "infantile sexual researches" (p. 78)—undergoes remodeling by two characteristic defenses. These "researches" can become repressed, resulting in inhibited expression, or they can undergo sublimation, becoming intellectual or artistic endeavors. He iden-

tified two types of sublimation—one more pure or successful, as in Leonardo's case, and a second, "more neurotic" one. The more neurotic sublimation involves:

. . . compulsive brooding, naturally in a distorted and un-free form, but sufficiently powerful to sexualize thinking itself and to colour intellectual operations with the pleasure and anxiety that belong to sexual processes proper . . . [such that] the intellectual feeling, so much desired, of having found a solution recedes more and more into the distance. [p. 80]

Freud's emphasis was on freeing biography from its hagiographic nature, and demonstrating that great men also have childhood precursors to their subjects or behavior that psychoanalysis can help illuminate. He nevertheless wanted to reinforce that Leonardo did not suffer from general "inferiority" (p. 137), but that he underwent a degree of sublimation of his libido that affected his artistic and intellectual work without reducing its quality. Kris's (1936, 1952) studies continued the separation of artistic talents and defensive maneuvers of "acceptable" artists from the pathological personality elements of those neurotics or psychotics unable to produce acceptable art. For the former group, the drive to create remained safely integrated within defensive structure that was not pathological enough to disrupt the communication of the artwork to its audience.

With Winnicott's (1953, 1967) emphasis on transitional space, and continuing with the work of Balint, the focus began to center more on the preoedipal contributors to artistic production. The transitional phenomena retain the potential to "become widened" in post-infant life and to develop into artistic and cultural pursuits. Balint (1958, 1968) delimited an "area of creation," distinct from the oedipal area and the area of basic fault. Here "there is no external object present" (1968, p. 25). The area of creation possesses properties that are especially fruitful for aesthetic creation. It is inaccessible until a finished product is concretized. Yet the subject is not completely alone; there are "pre-objects" there. The primi-

tive activity of creation is likened to the kind of relations that take place on the level of the basic fault—a mode of being involved with early object relations and extreme anxieties. The implied analogy is that the regressive nature of the area of creation is needed for art, in the same way that full-fledged therapeutic regression can lead to a “new beginning” (Balint 1968, p. 131).

Other contemporary theorists, such as Gedo (1996), have tended to regard examples of artwork themselves as not especially conflicted. They are more accurately described as “perfected offerings” arising from the “nurturant matrix” of the artist’s childhood. It is the mismatch between the gifted child with “atypical constitutional endowments” and his family that can result in the epiphenomenon of increased psychopathology in the artist, according to this view. Where Gedo is closer to depicting poor affect regulation as influencing artistic production is in his description of Anthony Trollope’s recovery from his blocked periods, in which he stated: “Creative potential has been available all along and protects the individual from injuries to self-esteem” (1996, p. 82).

Chessick (1999), in his close reading of Ezra Pound as a prototype of a pathological artist, also comes down firmly on the side of periods of healthy ego functioning as a precondition for periods of successful creation, with periods of increased pathology leading simply to paralysis and ineffectiveness.

Yet all these views tend to artificially separate out the regression from the art. The character pathology is either assumed to be well circumscribed and capable of being well honed within the artwork (Freud/Kris); assumed to be omnipresent in all artistic processes and thereby not special to particular artists/periods of their work (Winnicott/Balint); or to be not especially related to the unique genius that allows for art production (Gedo/Chessick). The successful artwork produced by the impaired artist comes to be viewed almost like a jettisoned aviator from a nose-diving plane—the skilled “brains” of the operation deftly avoid being taken down by the faulty and damaged vehicle with the production of each new work.

There are implications for applying the dynamics of more disturbed patients to the production of their artwork. Greater character pathology tends to allow for lesser degrees of freedom to be tolerated in the responses of others. The subset of more narcissistically disturbed artists tend to evoke certain affective responses more than others. Within a framework more connected to containing the magnitude of their creator's daily dilemmas and considerable intrapsychic distress, these artworks of more primitive artists tend to involve the dynamics of control and debasement—as byproducts of a failed search for a mirroring response, in some cases.

With his use of the *Symphonie Fantastique* to literally convince his libidinous object, Harriet Smithson, to participate in the inner object world depicted in the work, Berlioz has uncovered the underlying fantasies inherent in some disturbed artists' work—to force understanding of his “original,” parent-caused hurts from his “new,” listening parental figures—the audience, and particularly Smithson as a derivative maternal figure.⁸ If, as Pollock (1975) pointed out, the affect of mourning can be processed through music that has the requiem as its standard genre, can't we imagine that there are other musical genres, whether in standard or more distorted formats, suitable for dealing with Berlioz's difficult affects?

The structure of *Symphonie Fantastique* gives us rich insights into the desperate needs that Berlioz and some narcissistic artists face. The glue that holds together most tonal music of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as providing for satisfying suspense and interest, is amended in his symphony. The usual method involves the establishment of a tonic key center at the beginning of the piece, a subsequent journey to more distant key signatures, and finally a fulfilling homecoming to the original tonic key at the end of the piece; and what is termed *thematic* or *motivic* material—patterns of a few rhythms or pitches, such as the famous triplet motive at the beginning of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony—usually recur in varied forms throughout a piece to provide a supplemental, surface-level sense of cohesion.

⁸ This conception can also be seen in McDougall (1995).

In *Symphonie Fantastique*, however, the assurance of predictable harmonic structures and standard thematic forms is undercut in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. The form is not that of the usual symphony. It heralds more of what Wagner will do in the 1850s in his revolutionary *Tristan und Isolde*. Wagner wrote about the “art of transition,” in which large formal structures become secondary to what is required in the moment to better reflect a character’s emotional state or a reigning artistic idea (see Chafe 2005). Berlioz employs the repetition and reworking of the famous *idée fixe* of his “beloved” in all five movements of *Symphonie Fantastique*. Relying on musical repetitions of the composer’s maternal longings to provide coherence, the symphony seems to reflect in musical form what Berlioz may have experienced dynamically as difficulties in his evocative memory of loved or soothing objects. There must be a literal *rehearing* of the notes of the beloved’s theme throughout all movements, as Berlioz shows the audience the full breadth of his mind’s involvement and difficulties with this tantalizing internal object representation.⁹

Furthermore, with the eventual merger of the maternal and paternal themes, as I have identified them in *The Witches’ Sabbath*, Berlioz is able to portray something of the overstimulation and victimization that may have been his experience vis-à-vis the parental dyad. The themes interpenetrate in a musical depiction of maddening, primal scene-derived material in which he is powerless and excluded, even as the overwrought intensity of the music attempts to overcome the painful feelings involved. The extreme manipulation of forms and the exaggerated instrumentation give him the power to depict his affective world very commandingly. His modified thematic “coda” that ends the fifth movement is fittingly left out in his description of the music in his program; with its sudden dissolution of the movement’s tormenting/punishing, parental themes, this coda may provide Berlioz with the self-generated

⁹ Of course, this is another example in which Berlioz’s psychological necessities wind up contributing to a new benchmark in music, in which deeply personal and self-revealing material become accepted elements of a composer’s palette.

reassurance that he is able to reverse his hurts, even as it also attempts to reassure the audience about the previous disturbing content.

Yet the harmonic surprise, or shock, remains. The mixed-reception history of the work may clue us in to the degree to which Berlioz's pathology colors the music, even if his heightened emotional coloring of his text was to be later absorbed into the mainstream of musical expressionism. The result is not necessarily flawed or "compromised" as much as it comes across with an altered (and intensified) affective resonance. This resonance may represent more the enormous aesthetic scaffolding needed to address the "piling on" of hurts and temporary compensations within Berlioz's full musical canvas, than it does an inadequate disguise of unconscious elements.

The concept of the *aesthetic illusion* has been used to explain how unconscious elements are kept at an agreeable distance from a general audience. This concept requires an amendment for the successful artwork of the disturbed artist, however. In these cases, the illusion is not "less thick" because of less talent and ability to disguise on the part of the artist. As a sort of buffer, it needs to be "thicker" because of the more intense, immediate affective needs of a different sort that engage the audience. In other words, Berlioz—given his inability to use present-day relationships for relief—needed his work to become a container for his affective struggles, which influenced the style by which unconscious material was communicated via the *Symphonie Fantastique*. This increased urgency in handling affects resulted in his exaggerated and innovative use of materials at his disposal: expanded but unfamiliar instrumentation and the warping of expected or familiar organizing structures.

In turn, Berlioz's intertwining of the psychological themes of idealization/devaluation, and of harrowing primal scene-related material, is thrust into the audience in a qualitatively different manner. The audience becomes part of a music-making process that has as its unstated goal not just the communication of, but also help in the control of, a highly unregulated affect experience,

in order to effect relief. Remember that Berlioz is literally trying to influence the audience to prove his success to Harriet Smithson—a need experienced as so raw and unbuffered that he breaks conventions and portrays his own emotional dilemmas as if directly within the work.

Berlioz here is closer to employing the second, more sexualized of Freud's two types of sublimation, an orientation less connected to the satisfaction of achieving an intellectual goal. Urgently needing to contain his internal dilemmas, Berlioz has imbued *Symphonie Fantastique* with elements that caused considerable disgust and aversion, alongside a sense of frantic excitement, in the audience of his day. My argument is that it would be facile to state that such a reaction was due solely to the work's general breaking of conventions; instead, we can meaningfully utilize the available psychoanalytic data to show how Berlioz's pathology and distress at that time of his life have contributed to the work's complex reception.

POSTSCRIPT

Despite how monumental his effect was to be, Berlioz's recollections of his life are filled with melancholy and frustration. He died unhappy and without credit for his contribution to the world of music. While his vulnerabilities may have helped propel him to create one of his greatest works, the dark side of his genius was that his artistic ability also served as a complex, action-oriented solution to his problems in self-regulation. So powerful was his frenzied investment in the process of composing *Symphonie Fantastique* and in championing it that he was able to partially escape into the rich tapestry of the musical fantasy he was creating. So, while his work may have provided temporary shelter from the misery of his longings, it did not allow for lasting relief. Unlike the endings of his beloved Shakespeare tragedies, there was no fulfilling, purging pathos at the conclusion of Berlioz's life. When asked near the end whether he believed there was a divine Father ready to care for the departed, Berlioz replied: "There is only Nothingness" (Barzun 2000, p. 18).

Considering the dark necessities that underlay Berlioz's character and his art, I can no longer listen to his exquisite *Symphonie Fantastique* without hearing a note of anguish. His otherwise intrepid, Romantic-era battle cry on theory and form—"Music is free. It does what it wishes, and without permission" (Bloom 2000, p. 5)—evokes a similar wince, once one is exposed to the dynamics that conditioned his art. Yet I believe that listening to *Symphonie Fantastique* is ultimately enriched by appreciating its psychoanalytically clarified "full story," for this allows us to appreciate that, behind the imaginative fantasy elements and richly crafted score, there were deeper hurts than previously realized—hurts unresolvable by the composer through even the best of his music.

APPENDIX: PROGRAM OF THE SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE¹⁰

A young musician of unhealthily sensitive nature and endowed with a vivid imagination has poisoned himself with opium in a paroxysm of lovesick despair. The narcotic dose he had taken was too weak to cause death but it has thrown him into a long sleep accompanied by the most extraordinary visions. In this condition his sensations, his feelings and his memories find utterance in his sick brain in the form of musical imagery. Even the beloved one takes the form of melody in his mind, like a fixed idea (*idée fixe*) which is ever returning and which he hears everywhere.

First Movement: Visions and Passions (Rêveries. Passions)

At first, he thinks of the uneasy and nervous condition of his mind, of somber longings, of depression and joyous elation without any recognizable cause, which he experienced before the beloved one had appeared to him. Then he remembers the ardent

¹⁰ This version and translation of the Program come from pp. v-vi of Berlioz (1830), based on a 1900 reprint of Berlioz's music. Other versions and translations abound; indeed, Bloom (1998) states that Berlioz is known to have changed details of the wording of the program at least fourteen times for different performances of the piece that he prepared.

love with which she suddenly inspired him; he thinks of his almost insane anxiety of mind, and his raging jealousy, of his re-awakening love, of his religious consolation.

Second Movement: A Ball (Un Bal)

In a ballroom, amidst the confusion of a brilliant festival, he finds the loved one again.

Third Movement: In the Country (Scène aux champs)

It is a summer evening. He is in the country musing when he hears two shepherd-lads who play the *ranz des vaches* (the tune used by the Swiss to call their flocks together) in alternation. This shepherd duet, the locality, the soft whisperings of the trees stirred by the zephyr-wind, some prospects of hope recently made known to him, all these sensations unite to impart a long unknown repose to his heart and to lend a smiling color to his imagination. And then she appears once more. His heart stops beating, painful forebodings fill his soul. "Should she prove false to him!" One of the shepherds resumes the melody, but the other answers him no more Sunset . . . distant rolling of thunder . . . loneliness . . . silence.

Fourth Movement: Procession to the Stake (Marche au Supplice)

He dreams that he had murdered his beloved, that he has been condemned to death and is being led to the stake. A march that is alternatively somber and wild, brilliant and solemn, accompanies the procession. The tumultuous outbursts are followed without modulation by measured steps. At last the fixed idea returns, for a moment a last thought of love is revived—which is cut short by the death-blow.

*Fifth Movement: (Yearning for/Dream of) The Witches' Sabbath
(Songe d'une nuit du Sabbat)*

He dreams that he is present at a witches' dance, surrounded by horrible spirits, amidst sorcerers and monsters in many fearful forms, who have come to attend his funeral. Strange sounds, groans, shrill laughter, distant yells, which other cries seem to an-

swer. The beloved melody is heard again but it has its noble and shy character no longer; it has become a vulgar, trivial, and grotesque kind of dance. *She* it is who comes to attend the witches' meeting. Friendly howls and shouts greet her arrival She joins the infernal orgy Bells toll for the dead . . . a burlesque parody of the *Dies Irae* . . . the witches' round dance....The dance and the *Dies Irae* are heard at the same time.

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THE POWER OF VISUAL MEMORY: THE EARLIEST REMEMBERED DRAWING OF ALBERTO GIACOMETTI, *SNOW WHITE IN HER COFFIN*

BY LAURIE WILSON

Since the time of Freud, many psychoanalysts have seen screen memories and earliest memories as reflecting underlying dynamics. I propose that an earliest remembered artwork is a highly condensed construction similar to a screen memory. Alberto Giacometti's earliest remembered drawing, of Snow White in Her Coffin, contains clues to the artist's personality and references to childhood experience. Giacometti's memory of the drawing done in childhood is a striking condensation of significant biographical events and psychodynamic conflicts, as well as a marker of important unconscious fantasies. The artist's postwar sculptural style, utilizing gaunt figures, epitomizes the final transformation of the psychological meaning of his earliest remembered drawing.

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the earliest remembered drawing by the groundbreaking, modernist artist Alberto Giacometti. I will show that, like a screen memory or an earliest memory, Giacometti's remembered drawing is a condensation of striking external and in-

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ternal events and serves as a marker of important unconscious fantasies. I will conclude my discussion by connecting Giacometti's first remembered drawing to his later artistic work and style.

Having recently published a book on Alberto Giacometti (Wilson 2003), I will use Giacometti's earliest drawing, or, as he phrased it, "the oldest drawing I remember [having drawn]," to explore key elements of his psychic life. Giacometti's "oldest drawing" was of *Little Dwarfs Around the Glass Coffin of the Dead Princess*.¹ Though a number of Giacometti's drawings done in childhood have survived, this one has not. While it is impossible to accurately date a child's no-longer-extant drawing, it is likely to have been done some time between the artist's sixth and twelfth years. At age seventeen, he describes it to his best friend and former boarding school classmate as "a small drawing, one of the very first ones [I did], with little dwarfs around a glass coffin of the dead princess" (A. Giacometti, unpublished, a).

Forty-three years later, the artist again refers to the drawing in an interview with an art writer (Schneider 1961): "The oldest drawing I remember was not at all from nature—but the illustration of a story. Snow White in a little coffin with the dwarfs. As a child I rather liked to illustrate stories" (p. 48, translation by the author). In this second reference, the Snow White drawing is no longer "one of the very first," but is "the oldest drawing I remember." The passage of time has consolidated Giacometti's memory and enshrined it as primary.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Since I know of no literature on a person's earliest remembered drawing, I turn first to its closest approximation—the psychoanalytic literature on the earliest memory, and especially Freud's first contribution on screen memories (1899), which contains his most cogent ideas on the subject. A screen memory, he wrote, is a recol-

¹ Many of Giacometti's early drawings are copies of other artists' works made from books, with the occasional copy of an illustration of a children's story.

lection “whose value lies in the fact that it represents in the memory impressions and thoughts of a later date whose content is connected with its own by symbolic or similar links” (pp. 315-316). Freud concluded his paper with the provocative summary statement that:

It may indeed be questioned whether we have any memories at all *from* our childhood: memories *relating to* our childhood may be all that we possess. Our childhood memories show us our earliest years not as they were but as they appeared at the later periods when the memories were aroused. In these periods of arousal . . . memories did not . . . emerge; they were *formed* at that time. [1899, p. 322, italics in original]

Though Freud (1917) did not suggest that earliest memories or screen memories be used as diagnostic tools, he opened the door to such considerations:

It usually happens that the very recollection to which the patient gives precedence, which he relates first, with which he introduces the story of his life, proves to be the most important, the very one that holds the key to the secret pages of his mind. [pp. 148-149]

During the first half of the twentieth century, the idea that the earliest memory was significant gained momentum, and a generalized conviction developed among some Freudian analysts that, like the first dream reported in an analysis, earliest memories often provide profound insights into an individual's personality. The non-veridical nature of the earliest memory gives it special status as a psychological condensation (though that may not be clear to adults recalling an earliest memory at long remove from the so-called remembered event). Psychiatrists and psychologists steeped in psychodynamic approaches have pursued the idea that earliest memories are clinically meaningful and potentially predictive, and have developed sophisticated testing protocols and research designed to verify and validate their observations.

Eisenstein and Ryerson (1951) argued that the first conscious memory “may be regarded as the earliest, perhaps clearest, deriva-

tive of forgotten infantile conflicts . . . [and] can serve a useful purpose in differential diagnosis" (p. 220). Langs (1965) found a significant relationship between first memory and personality, from his study of forty-eight subjects using personality measures, which included a clinical interview, an autobiography, the Thematic Apperception Test, Rorschach, and Wechsler-Bellevue Test. Mayman (1968) claimed that "early memories may be analyzed as if they were fantasized representations of self and others, rather than as factual accounts of a few scattered events in a person's life" (p. 315). Saul, Snyder, and Sheppard (1956) were unequivocal in their claims about the usefulness of earliest or first memories: "They reveal, probably more clearly than any other single psychological datum, the central core of each person's psychodynamics, his chief motivations, form of neurosis, and emotional problem" (p. 228).

In a now-classic paper, Arlow (1969) provides a powerful, subtle, and complex perspective on the subject of screen memories, noting that they are

. . . an exquisite example of the mingling of fantasy with perception and memory, the raw material for the construction of the screen memories originating from many periods of the individual's life, disguised and rearranged in keeping with the defensive needs of the ego. [p. 38]

Since the 1970s, the prime value of earliest or first memories has received little attention in the psychoanalytic literature. In general, such memories have been seen as providing plausible hypotheses about adult development, rather than as diagnostic or prognostic tools.

A finding of special interest for the subject of this paper is the fact that earliest memories invariably seem to contain a visual element (Westman, Westman, and Orellana 1996). Obviously, this could have particular meaning and resonance in the case of an artist, and could partially explain why a visual image recalled by an artist would likely contain both very powerful affect and meaning, in frozen form.

GIACOMETTI'S LIFE²

In order to make sense of such a significant memory and to see how it fits into the artist's inner life, we need to consider Giacometti's biographical story. Born in 1901 in the tiny community of Borgonuovo, in the deep Alpine Bregaglia Valley, Switzerland, fifteen miles from the Italian border, Alberto Giacometti grew up with two younger brothers and one sister. His father, Giovanni Giacometti, was an important post-Impressionist Swiss painter, and Alberto spent much of his free time during childhood in his father's studio, drawing and reading.

Alberto's mother, Annetta Giacometti, was the pious daughter of the local schoolteacher, an autocrat who believed in Spartan discipline. In temperament, Alberto's parents were opposites: Giovanni was warm, optimistic, and openly affectionate; Annetta, cooler and more distant. Annetta's mother had died when she was four and one-half years old, and she was raised by her father with the help of a succession of female relatives, five of whom died during her childhood.³ As a result of these many losses, Annetta developed a stoical strength, along with a need for unwavering stability and connectedness.

Alberto was Annetta's first child, born October 10, 1901. Approximately one year later, she gave birth to Diego. Less than two years after that, a daughter, Ottilia, entered the world. Finally, two and one-half years later, her youngest child, Bruno, was born.

In the summer of 1911, when Alberto was nearly ten years old, his mother contracted typhoid fever. She lay alternately comatose and delirious for several months. Two years later, in Alberto's twelfth year, his maternal grandfather died, and he claimed afterward that he had never "grown" beyond his twelfth year. During the same period, he discovered Egyptian art and culture, whose focus on magical practices and rituals, as well as its preoccupation

² For a brief chronology of Giacometti's life, see the appendix on pp. 501-503.

³ In 1871, the year of Annetta's birth, a maternal aunt, Anna, died; one year later, her paternal aunt, also called Anna, died. Four years later, her mother died. Less than three years after that, her paternal grandmother died. Finally, when she was fourteen, her aunt Clara died.

with death and rebirth, matched his own superstitious and phobic personality. For the rest of his life, he said that he admired the ancient Egyptian culture above all others and was fascinated by the life and art of Akhenaten.⁴

Though he always held a special position in the family as the eldest, brightest, and most gifted child, Alberto was teased by his siblings for his obsessional rituals. Most notable was his lifelong compulsion to line up his socks and shoes in an exact position by his bed every night before going to sleep. As an adult, he would not fly in airplanes or use elevators. The duration and tenacity of his need to perform some of these rituals testify to the continuing presence of magical thinking as a defense against anxiety.

After completing four years of secondary education at a strict evangelical boarding school (1915-1919), Alberto spent a year studying art in Geneva. There followed a year's sojourn in Italy, after which, at age twenty-one, he departed for Paris. Arriving in 1922, Giacometti spent his first three years in the French capital, completing formal artistic studies with Antoine Bourdelle, a disciple of Rodin. These years were punctuated by frequent long visits home to Switzerland.

In 1925, Giacometti made Paris his primary home, and by 1929, thanks to the reception of some of his first exhibited sculptures, Giacometti had become the leading sculptor of the surrealist group. Encouraged by his close friend André Breton, the charismatic physician-poet and the "Magus" of surrealism, the young Swiss artist began to use Freud's ideas about the unconscious and free association in his art. His surrealist works, generally dated from 1929 through 1934, are testimony of his gift in the creative reconstruction of deeply moving memories and fantasies from his childhood, especially those related to sexuality and aggression.

In 1933, at the height of Giacometti's involvement with the surrealists, his father died unexpectedly in Switzerland after what had

⁴ In 1913, a series of articles by Fechheimer about the newly discovered sculptures done for Akhenaten, as well as about his reign and religious beliefs, arrived in the Giacometti home. Alberto Giacometti would later make numerous copies of portraits of Akhenaten based on photographs in the articles.

seemed a minor illness. Not long afterward, Giacometti turned away from his surrealist style and began to work from nature, as his father had done. Four years later, on his birthday, his sister died in childbirth. The double loss of father and sister devastated the young artist, and for the next ten years, never satisfied with his efforts to capture what he considered the essence of a head or a figure, he miniaturized his work and destroyed almost everything he made.

Only in 1946, after his return to Paris from Geneva, where he had spent the war years near his ambivalently loved mother, did Giacometti find his signature style of elongated figures and heads. Though he continued to destroy a large portion of his work, he nevertheless produced an extensive body of paintings, drawings, and sculpture, and attained a legendary reputation as an uncompromising artist tormented by the impossibility of achieving his aim: to create works that were alive, and to capture reality the way he saw it. During this same year, 1946, Giacometti's mistress and future wife, the young Annette Arm, whom he had met in Geneva, came to live with him in Paris.

Living and working in the same comfortless, sixteen-by-sixteen-foot Parisian studio for forty years, Giacometti maintained the bearing of an Italian-Swiss mountain man from the rugged Bregaglia Valley of his birth. Appearing every evening at cafés and restaurants shabbily dressed, tousled, and covered with dust, Giacometti fascinated people with his sophisticated and ironic conversation and his insatiable curiosity. These qualities brought him the friendship of well-known literary figures, such as Sartre, Genet, and Beckett.

In 1966, at the height of his fame, Giacometti died in his sixty-fifth year, the same age that both his father and grandfather had been when they died.

GIACOMETTI'S EARLIEST REMEMBERED DRAWING

Returning now to my central focus, the artist's "earliest remembered drawing," I shall try to fathom its meaning for the young boy

who created it, as well as for the adult artist who recalled it. Respect for tradition held an important place in the Giacometti household, and it was common practice to read children's books aloud. "Snow White" (Grimm and Grimm 1857) was one of the stories that were read to the children (B. Giacometti 1988).

A brief narrative of Grimm's (1857) enduringly popular fairy tale follows:

A queen, who, having pricked her finger while sewing by the window and whose blood had fallen on the snowy ground, wished to have a little daughter who would be as white as the snow and as red as the blood, and would have hair as black as the ebony of the window frame. The queen gave birth to such a daughter, whom she called Snow White; the queen subsequently died.

A year later, the king married a beautiful but proud and haughty woman who could not bear that anyone should be more beautiful than she. The new queen had a magical mirror that always told her the truth about "who in this land is the fairest of all." When her stepdaughter was seven years old, the mirror shocked the queen by telling her that Snow White was more beautiful than herself. The envious queen employed a huntsman to kill the girl, but he took pity on the child and left her in the forest. Snow White ran away and found a cottage owned by seven dwarfs, who agreed to let her stay with them if she would cook, clean, and take care of them.

When, once again consulting her mirror, the queen discovered that Snow White was still alive, she made several attempts to kill her. The dwarfs successfully revived her after the first two murderous attacks, but were unable to rouse her after the third, when she ate a poisoned apple. They placed the dead child in a glass coffin. But because she still appeared to be alive, with her rosy cheeks intact, they did not bury her. Instead, they set her coffin out on a mountain, with one of them always keeping watch over it.

Eventually, a prince appeared. Falling in love with the beautiful princess in the coffin, he persuaded the dwarfs to let him carry her away, claiming he could not live with-

out seeing her. Miraculously, the piece of poisoned apple that the princess had ingested was ejected from her throat, and she came back to life, married the prince, and invited her wicked stepmother to the wedding. There, filled with rage and fear, the envious queen was forced to wear red-hot iron slippers and dance until she dropped down dead.

The scene from the story that the young Giacometti chose to depict—the first drawing he remembered having done—is of the seven-year-old Snow White (*Biancaneve* in Italian), who, according to the story, looked as if she were still alive, with pretty red cheeks, lying in her glass coffin and surrounded by the dwarfs.

That Giacometti, the adult artist, would make images in painting and sculpture of women standing absolutely still, on the edge between death and life—sometimes even in coffin-shaped cages (see Figure 1 on the following page⁵)—seems to be foretold by this “earliest remembered drawing” (which is unlikely to have been his actual first drawing).

How did he arrive at this paradigmatic memory that so remarkably foreshadows his future work? Is it a visual screen memory—the kind Freud first described in 1899, a coded condensation containing references to events that had occurred either earlier or later than the screen memory itself? Does the image contain the artist’s sense of relationships between himself and others, between men and women, and between mothers and daughters? What, if any, infantile conflicts are encoded in this image?

It is significant that Snow White (*Biancaneve*) was the family’s pet name for Alberto’s sister, Ottilia, and was the subject of several drawings and a painting by Alberto’s father, Giovanni Giacometti. Giovanni had made charming illustrations of children’s fairy tales several years earlier (see Bundi 1902), including scenes of princesses and witches. Some of Alberto’s early accomplished artwork is directly imitative of his father’s; Giovanni was his son’s first

⁵ This image, of *Caged Woman*, by Alberto Giacometti (1950), is © 2007 Artists Rights Society, New York, and the Société des Auteurs dans les Arts Graphiques et Plastiques, Paris, and appears here by permission.

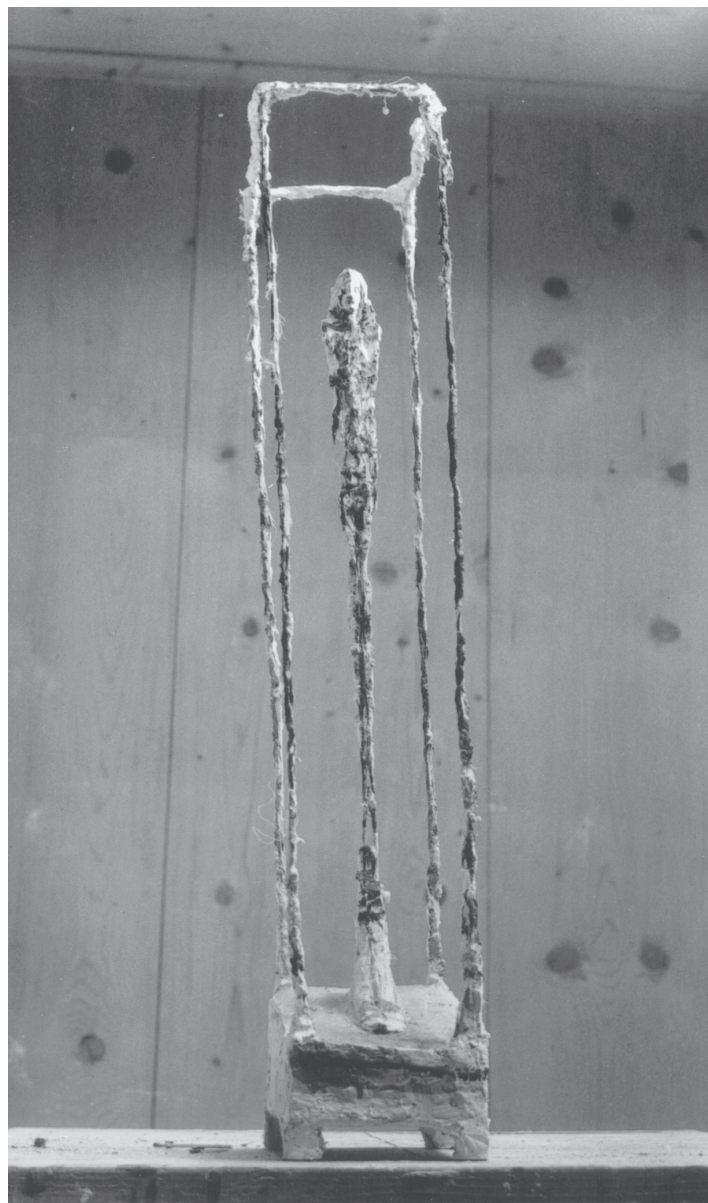


FIGURE 1

guide in all things artistic. One of the elder Giacometti's images of Snow White, painted in 1908, shows a young girl (Otilia would have been about five years old), standing pertly at the center of the canvas, beribboned and blonde, clothed in a dark dress and holding her hands together in a gesture of blessing or praise.

Thus, there are multiple reasons why Alberto might have chosen to make a drawing of Snow White. But why would he depict *his* Snow White as a dead princess in his "first remembered drawing," and surround her with mournful little, sibling-like admirers?

During the summer and fall of 1911, when his mother nearly died of typhoid, Alberto and his siblings were kept out of her sight for their own health. During their mother's illness and convalescence, Alberto shared a small downstairs room with his seven-year-old sister, since they were the only children in the family who were not sick (B. Giacometti 1988). Though Annetta sustained her hope of recovery by repeating that she could not die because she had four children to care for, the entire community believed that she would not survive, and made extraordinary efforts to keep up her spirits. When a neighbor woman, also a mother, died, straw was spread on the road so that Annetta would not be alarmed by the sound of a funeral hearse as it rolled by her window. When she finally did recover several months later, her hair had turned from black to gray.

Psychoanalysts have no difficulty finding links between female relatives in a child's mind and the females depicted by the child in art, and I believe that Alberto Giacometti's Snow White is a condensation of his mother and sister. Though the artist refers to a dead princess, his frightful vision is actually of a beloved individual who hovers between death and life. The female figure lying in deathlike stillness is, among other things, a probable reference to Giacometti's mother, Annetta, whose comatose condition he must have observed during her bout with deadly illness. At the time, he was sharing the same bedroom (and probably the same bed) with a sibling who was known by the same name and was the same age as the fairy tale princess.

Furthermore, the special treatment Alberto had always received from his family could have made him feel like a prince who had won the princess and whose severe stepmother lay dying upstairs. The birth of a daughter after two sons made Ottilia a special child in the Giacometti family. Alberto's envy for that special status most likely added to his ambivalent feelings for his Snow White sister.

Alberto Giacometti had a lifelong preoccupation with death. Even before his mother's near-fatal illness, Alberto was exposed to death both indirectly and directly, particularly to combinations of birth and death. His own birth coincided with the stillbirth of the child of his godfather, Cuno Amiet. Less than three years later, his paternal grandmother, Ottilia, died a week after the birth of his sister, also called Ottilia. These two instances of linked births and deaths might be "recalled" and indirectly expressed in his earliest remembered drawing. Snow White comes back to life (i.e., is reborn), and her wicked stepmother dies. The near death of his mother in 1911 and her recovery can be seen as a later, third pairing of life and death for Alberto.

In 1918, ten days before he wrote the letter recalling Snow White as his "earliest remembered drawing," the young artist experienced two significant deaths almost simultaneously. One was the headmaster of his boarding school. The other was Ferdinand Hodler, the leading Swiss painter of his time, a friend of Giovanni Giacometti and the godfather of Alberto's youngest brother, Bruno.

Recumbent dead or dying figures were frequent subjects at the turn of the century, especially in Giovanni Giacometti's artistic circle. The prototype for many of these was the unforgettable image of the *Dead Christ* by Hans Holbein.⁶ Ferdinand Hodler surpassed the others in terms of the sheer quantity of images of the

⁶ This unforgettable image is the topos appearing like a palimpsest from underneath the work of many later Swiss artists—including Alberto Giacometti, whose *Head on a Pole*, a sculpture done in 1947, has the same horrifying, open-mouthed, cadaverous head as Holbein's Christ. The image of an open-mouthed, recumbent figure haunts Alberto's work and can be found in many iterations, from the numerous images of his mother reclining in extreme old age, looking gaunt and nearly dead, to the etchings of Michel Leiris after his attempted suicide, rendered as though the people close to him were always at imminent risk

dead and dying, having produced dozens of drawings and paintings of the beloved women in his life, who died slowly and painfully under his artistic gaze while he documented their waning moments. Alberto Giacometti admired one of these drawings, which was on loan to his father in the summer of 1918, and he even entertained thoughts of stealing it. In a long letter to Lucas Lichtenhahn, his best friend from boarding school, he wrote: "It is in front of me while I am writing . . . a wonderful drawing representing the head of a sleeping sick woman . . . I would very much like to have it and not return it, but this would mean stealing" (A. Giacometti, unpublished, b).

Ferdinand Hodler was both friend and rival to Alberto's father, Giovanni Giacometti. Giovanni's ambivalence toward Hodler, evident in his satirical cartoons lampooning Hodler, would have been well known to the young Alberto. Yet at the time of Hodler's death, Alberto was a Hodler enthusiast. In the Giacometti household, where open expressions of anger were not permitted, we can imagine that there may have been some guilt upon hearing of his death. Might the son also have felt guilty about the death of his schoolmaster? Alberto's later writings about his childhood are filled with hostile fantasies and murderous wishes; any death that touched him personally would have been likely to arouse guilt and remorse as well as sadness.

In his May 1918 letter to Lucas Lichtenhahn, Alberto arrives at the recollection of his Snow White drawing after ruminating about Hodler's death, the absence of his father, and the artistic challenges posed by a watercolor he did for a school assignment; this painting was of Hermann, the adolescent hero of a classic tale by Goethe, *Hermann and Dorothea* (A. Giacometti, unpublished, a). It depicted Hermann and his mother under a pear tree—a touching scene in which a mother persuades her despondent son to tell his deepest secrets about his love for a young woman, and offers to help him overcome his father's resistance to the match.

of being permanently lost. Furthermore, it is perhaps not a coincidence that Giovanni Giacometti produced a woodcut of his artist friend Otto Vautier showing the recently dead artist with his mouth open and appearing cadaverous.

Giacometti writes that the topic was “quite difficult” for him, and details his struggles in painting the picture: he smeared it, felt helpless, and then quickly produced a second version and wrote a brief composition about it. Giacometti then writes that reading a friend’s first-grade compositions took him back to his own early memories:

These compositions were a continuation of my thoughts of Saturday and Sunday. I don’t understand why, but I lived completely in memories. All I saw, the most trivial little things, brought something to mind. I saw myself now here, now there, one time in Schiers, then suddenly as a small child at home, then in my father’s studio and so on. I remembered when in the grey past, almost in the pre-history, I sat with my father and was drawing. I saw a small drawing [the Snow White picture], one of the very first ones, with little dwarfs and a glass coffin of the dead princess. Do you know this story? How I would like to see this little drawing again. Some years ago, it was still around, now I don’t know where it is. The sky was so difficult to make, it was dark blue and one had to leave all the stars white. This gave a lot to do and the big stars turned out irregular. [A. Giacometti, unpublished, a]

What do we know about Giacometti’s perception of his mother at the time he first described his “earliest drawing” of Snow White? The watercolor that gave him so much trouble in 1918 provides clues. Here we see an aged woman in a long black dress who turns toward her son, her profile toward the viewer, gesticulating forcefully. He faces frontward, his hands at his sides, his legs slightly spread. His huge hat seems to overwhelm him and adds to the portrayal of his helpless passivity. In 1918, Alberto’s mother was once again ill, this time with a mild case of the worldwide influenza epidemic, but she was quarantined in his uncle’s house⁷ for a month at Christmastime, together with other members of the family. As a result, Alberto did not come home for the holidays; he was himself suffering from a mild bout of the flu.

⁷ It was in Alberto’s uncle’s house that the two Ottilias were born and died in 1904. In addition to these larger calamities, Alberto had been ill with mumps

Evidence of Giacometti's preoccupation with death and his feelings about his mother's illness around the time of his May 1918 letter can be seen in a self-portrait (see Figure 2 below) depicting a



FIGURE 2

and a painful course of orchitis at about that same time; we do not know whether or how much he was told of the consequences of his illness, but he subsequently believed that it was the cause of his inability to father children.

grimacing, curly-headed Alberto with a bird near his shoulder.⁸ Stylistically, this self-portrait has been dated at around 1917-1918.⁹ The image of the grimacing child is strikingly like that of the terrified child who stands by his dead mother's bed in Edvard Munch's *The Dead Mother and Her Child* (see Figure 3 below).¹⁰ Munch's image was reproduced in many versions, including numerous drawings and etchings executed between 1894 and 1901. Even Giacometti's depiction of his centrally parted hair rising to an inverted



FIGURE 3

⁸ The image on the previous page, of *Self-Portrait with Bird*, by Alberto Giacometti (1917), is © 2007 Artists Rights Society, New York, and the Société des Auteurs dans les Arts Graphiques et Plastiques, Paris, and appears here by permission.

⁹ World War I, with its astounding number of casualties, was taking place not far from his school, and Alberto had written home about seeing soldiers and hearing artillery fire. Furthermore, art journals and newspapers were filled with images of the dead and dying, both soldiers and civilians.

¹⁰ The above image, of *The Dead Mother and Her Child*, by Edvard Munch (c. 1897), is © 2007 The Munch Museum/The Munch-Ellingsen Group/Artists Rights Society, New York, and appears here by permission.

widow's peak (which appears in other of his self-portraits of the time) could be an aspect of the young artist's identification with Munch, who was one of his father's favorite artists (B. Giacometti 1988).

The bird in this self-portrait, which appears to be perched on the artist's hand, reinforces a connection with death. For Giacometti and others in his native Bregaglia Valley, the bird was understood as a reference to the departed soul (Dolfi-Giacometti 1990). This symbolism is manifestly evident on the gravestone that Alberto designed for his father in 1935, on which he placed a chalice, a sun, and a bird. Thirty years later, in 1966, his brother Diego fashioned a small bronze bird for Alberto's own grave. Alberto's awareness of the symbolism of the bird as the human soul in ancient Egypt is clear from his copy of a tomb painting, which depicts exactly that.¹¹

In writing about one of his surrealist sculptures, *The Palace at 4 A.M.*, the artist reports on his earliest memory of his mother:

In the statue of the woman on the left, I recognize my mother, just as she appears in my earliest memories. The mystery of her long black dress touching the floor troubled me; it seemed to me like a part of her body, and aroused in me a feeling of fear and confusion. All the rest has vanished and escaped my attention. This figure stands out against the curtain that is repeated three times, the very curtain that I saw when I opened my eyes for the first time. [A. Giacometti 1933b, p. 109]¹²

How can we make psychodynamic sense of these two "earliest memories"—the strong, upright mother and the horizontally rigid

¹¹ Decades after he produced this early self-portrait, Alberto copied an Egyptian tomb painting from Thebes, which must have seemed congenial as it depicted two souls in the form of birds.

¹² In June 1904, when he was two years, eight months old, Alberto's mother's mother-in-law died. Seventeen months later, she buried her sister. Mourning customs in the Bregaglia Valley at that time prescribed three to four years of wearing black or dark colors; we can therefore understand why Giacometti's earliest memories of his mother are of her wearing a long black dress.

Snow White in her glass coffin? Historically, Giacometti's father presented his attractive wife as a commanding figure, a nearly perfect ideal of nurturance and homely strength. Elsewhere (Wilson 2003), I have addressed the false idealization of that image; yet the family myth contained an element of truth—Annetta Giacometti was always described as strong, stoical, and determined. She had inherited her father's asceticism and was known to be "hard" as well as practical. Ever mindful of her family's welfare, she had little tolerance for softness in daily life or in her children. She would sit in the dark on a hard chair rather than a soft one, and she was masochistically frugal. She was the moral arbiter in the Giacometti household and faithfully attended the local Protestant church, whose fire-and-brimstone style fortified her tendency toward severity. She craved her husband's gentle softness, but maintained strict uprightness as a counterpoint to it.

Perhaps deeply embedded in the "lost" image of the comatose Snow White was Giacometti's sense of his mother as cold and emotionally distant—the sad, frozen victim of so many early losses. Based upon our knowledge of the psychologically complex adult he would become, we can easily imagine the enormous remorse that the guilt-prone child might have felt about any aggressive wishes and fantasies directed toward his mother—especially during that summer of 1911, when her illness obliged the family to return from their summer home in Maloja, which was Alberto's favorite sunny retreat above the dark Bregaglia Valley.

Giacometti's image of his mother wearing a long dress in *The Palace at 4 A.M.* presents her as a somewhat masculine figure: vertically upright, solid, and stable—not gaunt like his postwar figures. Her rigidity may have several connotations, including death, moral righteousness, and/or emotional constancy. A younger, nubile female figure made by Giacometti at around the same time, *Walking Woman*, is stiff, but seems to move. In 1943, during the war years, Giacometti made a life-size, standing female figure entitled *The Chariot*. This figure, too, is firmly upright, but she stands with her

hands at her sides, inert and able to be mobile only if she is pulled on her wheeled chariot by someone else.

After the war, Giacometti's female figures lost even that minimal capacity to move. And they also lost their solidity; they became emaciated—practically scarecrows—standing where the artist has placed them, on the edge between life and death. The bodies of both male and female postwar figures are a striking mixture of growth and decay. Equally gaunt, the men mostly walk while the women are immobilized. When the female figures are seen in their coffin-like frames, they show a similarity to Giacometti's earliest remembered drawing that is practically uncanny. A vital part of Giacometti's attempt at mastery was his need to actively create art in order to transform his fear of death, and his lifelong preoccupation with it.

Giacometti's anxiety about death was often expressed in the form of time confusion. In addition to what might be considered his delayed response to his mother's near death, evidenced by the screen memory of his *Snow White* drawing, he also had a sort of delayed response to the death of van Meurs, an elderly Dutch archivist whom he barely knew; this occurred while they were on a trip to Northern Italy when Giacometti was twenty, and was frequently described by Giacometti during middle age as his first personal encounter with death. The Dutchman had died of heart failure in their hotel room shortly after the beginning of the trip.

Giacometti never stopped telling people that this youthful experience changed him forever. He did not write about it, however, until his next frightening encounter with death occurred, in 1946, when Tonio Potosching, a fellow artist and his concierge in Paris, died in the room next to his. Writing about Tonio released him to write about van Meurs's death, too (A. Giacometti 1946). But another twenty years passed before Giacometti would speak about his experience of Tonio's death, saying the following:

When for the first time I clearly perceived how a head I was looking at could become fixed, immobilized defini-

tively in time, I trembled with terror as never before in my life, and a cold sweat ran down my back. It was no longer a living head, but an object I was looking at like any other object, but no, differently, not like any other object, but like something simultaneously living and dead. I cried out in terror as if I had just passed over into a world I had never seen. *All the living were dead* and that vision was often repeated in the subway, in the street, in a restaurant, in front of my friends. [Clay 1963, p. 143, translation by the author, italics in original]

As we have seen, this was not the first time that Giacometti had observed a head immobilized in death or illness. At age two and three-quarters, he had seen his dead grandmother; at age ten, he had seen his mother deathly ill; and at age twelve, he had seen his beloved grandfather dead. As is the case with many artists, once Giacometti saw something, it stayed in his memory forever. And he gained control over the memory by creating an image of his own. During childhood, the frightening visions of death and near death were mastered and condensed into the lost, but always remembered, Snow White picture.¹³

In adulthood, after the deaths of his father and sister, Giacometti regained control through the process of destroying and re-making his many little figurines. And while living in Paris in the immediate postwar period, he had to confront death almost daily, as the city was inundated with the sight of corpses and the barely living survivors of concentration camps—through newsreels showing scenes from the camps and the survivors wandering through his neighborhood. Shortly after the war, he developed a style featuring emaciated figures that represented the very act of survival in

¹³ A frightening sight always made a deep impression on the artist, appearing like a bolt from the blue. Jean Starobinski (1986), a friend of his during the war years in Geneva, observed that Giacometti's way of dealing with shocking visual material was to keep going back to it repeatedly until he grasped it progressively and made it work for him. He noted that Giacometti was fascinated with the photographs of the bodies of Mussolini and his lover, Clara Patacci, hanging upside down, and kept these in his portfolio.

the twentieth century. But even these iconic images he felt forced to destroy and remake.¹⁴

As epitomized in the Snow White drawing of little dwarfs staring entranced at the frightful sight of their dead caretaker, passivity in the face of a striking visual image was an important aspect of the complex threads making up Giacometti's personality and lifestyle. He repeatedly claimed that he had no idea why his postwar figures were so thin, or why he kept miniaturizing his tiny figurines. "It just happened," he kept saying; "I am cornered."

I have elsewhere observed (Wilson 2003) that a significant factor in the development of Giacometti's passivity was the forced helplessness repeatedly experienced throughout his childhood during the long sessions of holding a pose—often naked—for portraits by his father. In 1918, the year of the Snow White letter, he was again submitting to his father by taking a humiliating position with his brother, as the two adolescents are shown standing in water, nude and bent over with their buttocks in the air. Their father subsequently turned this painting into an advertising poster for his one-person exhibit in Zürich.

Giacometti's particular way of seeing was colored by a sado-masochistic sense of himself as either passive victim or active victimizer. And, as soon as he was able, he turned the tables and became the artist who forced his family and friends to serve as models for endlessly prolonged portrait sessions, thus pressing them into a painful sado-masochistic embrace. From at least adolescence onward, he habitually stared at women. He was famous—not only in the Bregaglia Valley where he grew up, but also in Paris—for his inclination to embarrass women by ogling them. In Paris in the

¹⁴ I have argued elsewhere (Wilson 2003) that Giacometti was subject to *nachträglichkeit*. As a result of his maturation during the war years and his positive experience with Annette Arm, he could revise and transform the memories of his earlier experiences in light of later ones. Hence, his "memory" of his mother's gaunt body was transformed after he had seen the dead-alive victims of the war in Paris. That transformation was fundamental to his ability to arrive at his new postwar style of filiform figures (see Wilson 2003, pp. 225-245).

early 1920s, when attracted to a girl, he would often stare at her with an almost hallucinated intensity—immobile, his arms held stiffly at his sides, fists clenched. As Giacometti himself described it as follows.

I remember when I was a young man in Paris I sometimes stared so hard at people, I didn't know that they became incensed, as if I didn't see what I wanted to see, as if everything were so confused that one could not decipher what one wanted to see. [Drôt 1963, pp. 245-246]

Several of Giacometti's revealing surrealist works depict figures with bulbous eyes staring at females. In later life, he continued to stare at women, using his status as an artist obsessed with perception to rationalize this. There is also extensive evidence of his voyeurism in sexual relations, not only in his lifelong involvement with prostitutes, but also in his relationship with his wife and last mistress, both of whom he asked to describe or draw details of their sexual encounters with other men (Lord 1983, pp. 425-426; Lust 1988). His sexual passivity could well have one additional unconscious meaning: it might have felt like death to be passive and masochistic, and by becoming the active, even sadistic, artist who holds his models in place, he may have felt that he could come back to life—just like Snow White, whose revenge was complete once her homicidal stepmother died.

A considerable part of the terror Giacometti experienced related to his fear of his own aggression—aggression that was vividly expressed in some of his surrealist sculptures, such as the 1932 work entitled *Woman with Her Throat Cut*. During his rebellious surrealist days, the artist had written about a bedtime ritual begun in early childhood, which included a nightly falling-asleep fantasy of patricide and matricide; this had to be allayed by lining up his socks and shoes next to his bed in an exact order, which had become a rigid need.¹⁵

¹⁵ Alberto's youngest brother recalled this ritual from his earliest years and observed that Alberto was still obeying its strictures at the end of his life (B. Giacometti 1988).

The imagined danger of Giacometti's own aggressive fantasies was unfortunately reinforced when his father, Giovanni, unexpectedly died a few weeks after the publication of Alberto's fantasized patricide. Instead of taking charge of funeral arrangements, conduct expected from him as the eldest son, the artist took to bed in the hospital where his father had just died, lying rigidly stiff like his dead father. Though he had a fever, no diagnosable illness could be found. Alberto recovered only after his father's funeral, which he did not attend (B. Giacometti 1988; Lord 1983, pp. 147-149). An additional signal of the son's remorse and probable guilt feelings was his return to artistic figuration (his father's style) after a five-year hiatus.

Alberto Giacometti's response to his father's death strongly suggests an unconscious fantasy that he was responsible for the deaths of people whom he loved. His rage had somehow taken their lives. As we have seen, to master his anxiety, he felt forced to take an action and to repeat it over and over. As an artist, his primary means of navigating the world was through his visual sense. By looking at someone, he could turn them into a congealed object—a dead object. If he could do that, he could also turn them back into a living object—"a living head." His gaze could kill, and it could also create. After the war, he began creating absolute immobility in all his sculptures; he made objects that were simultaneously alive and dead. He had become the modern version of the Egyptian artists whom he so admired; he, like they, could seemingly bring the dead back to life.

Thus, the childhood Snow White drawing does indeed predict the personality style of the adult artist—somasochistic, phobic, and passive-aggressive. He suffers and others must suffer with him: both artist and model are locked in an exhausting embrace. Whenever anyone near him dies, he becomes rigid with fright and guilt about his homicidal fantasies. His father, who was more "motherly" than his mother was, kept him locked in a loving embrace and taught him the means to do the same to others. His masculine

mother held herself distant and rigid, but provided him with basic necessities and became the object of his enduring ambivalence.¹⁶ As we are aware, when aggressive feelings cannot be expressed or even known, they are frequently transformed into their opposite—phobic fears for the other person's safety and a need to maintain close contact in order to be reassured that nothing bad will happen.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I propose the following explanation for Alberto Giacometti's remembered "first" drawing. His choice to depict the *dead princess* that the little dwarfs believe and hope to be still alive is a cogent metaphor for his own ambivalent feelings about his recumbent and fatally ill mother in 1911. That he describes Snow White as dead when she is really in the grip of poison, from which she will definitely recover, is significant. It might not be too great a leap, in light of what we now know of his relationship with his mother, to infer that his distortion represented a wish to kill her, or perhaps a fantasy that he had already killed her.

It is unlikely that this very visual youngster would not have stolen glances at his prostrate mother in her stuporous condition, or that he would not have been forcibly struck by the remarkable change in her hair color as a result of her illness. And sharing a room with his sister at an age when early adolescent sexual stirrings are likely to make this experience erotically frustrating was complicated by the prospect of his mother dying upstairs. The link in this chain connecting mother, sister, father, and son is *bianca*, the Italian word for white; we are not surprised to learn that the

¹⁶ In Giacometti's adult behavior, there is abundant evidence that his feelings of hostility toward his mother—feelings that he needed to suppress and deny most of his life—were massive and intense. He wrote to her every few days, he called her every day once phone service became available, and he made prolonged visits to her every year. Her near death in 1911, followed two years later by the death of her father in 1913, made her a ready target for Giacometti's phobic concerns about death. With that in mind, we can better understand his need for obsessional defenses and magical solutions to create a haven of safety around himself and his loved ones.

first love of Giacometti's adult life was Bianca, his cousin who was also his sister's friend, whom he got to know at nineteen in Rome when he lived with her family for six months. (Giacometti struggled unsuccessfully to do a portrait head of Bianca at this time.) Incestuous feelings for mother and sister were displaced onto this young woman, about whom Giacometti suffered pangs of jealousy all his life. All these links are condensed in his earliest remembered drawing, which signals an early instance of apotropaic and prophylactic properties used to ward off fearful events. The nurturing girl-mother is not really dead—nor is she really available to the young artist.

Transformation of a frightening experience, especially a visual one, is a key element in the works of many painters and sculptors. To be able to look at something unpleasant, hold it in memory, regard it repeatedly, and finally make the remembered visible by giving it form permits the artist to transform inchoate horror into manageable shape. This process provides a sense of control, safety, and power. The capacity to take something experienced as horrible and to quiet its power allows an artist to regain some of the omnipotence of early childhood.

In this paper, I have proposed that Alberto Giacometti's earliest remembered drawing contains the record of his need to transform a frightening visual experience of near death into art. In a similar manner, his postwar style epitomizes the final transformation of that need into masterworks that stand as monuments to the worldwide necessity of dealing with the frightening sights and events of the war and the Holocaust.

APPENDIX: AN ABBREVIATED CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF ALBERTO GIACOMETTI

- 1901 Stillbirth of Cuno Amiet's son; eleven days later, on October 10, Alberto Giacometti is born in Borgonuovo, Switzerland; Amiet is named godfather.

-
- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 1904 | May 31: Alberto's sister, Ottilia, is born in Stampa, Switzerland; June 6: his paternal grandmother (also Ottilia) dies there. |
| 1908 | The family begins to summer in Maloja, Switzerland, above the Bregaglia Valley; Alberto's father, Giovanni, paints Ottilia as Snow White and begins to make nude paintings of his children. |
| Summer–
Fall 1911 | Alberto's mother, Annetta, almost dies in typhoid epidemic. |
| May 1913 | Giovanni Stampa, maternal grandfather, dies. |
| Spring
1913 | The Fechheimer articles (1913a, 1913b) about Akhenaten and his sculptor appear in the Giacometti home. |
| 1915–1919 | Alberto attends the Evangelical Secondary School in Schiers. |
| 1918 | May 19: Ferdinand Hodler dies; Alberto's headmaster at Schiers dies. May 29: Alberto writes a letter to Lucas Lichtenhahn, referring to "earliest remembered drawing." |
| 1920–1921 | In Rome, Alberto falls in love with his first cousin, Bianca, while staying with her family. |
| 1921 | March: Alberto meets van Meurs in Italy; September: Alberto travels with van Meurs in the Tyrol, where van Meurs dies. |
| 1922 | Alberto moves to Paris. |
| 1929–1934 | Alberto participates in a surrealist group as their leading sculptor. Creates <i>Palace at 4 A.M.</i> (1932). |

- 1933 April: Ottilia marries and moves to Geneva. May: Alberto writes a patricidal fantasy, published in the surrealist journal *Le surréalisme au service de la révolution* (A. Giacometti 1933a). June: Giovanni dies.
- 1937 October 10: Alberto's nephew Silvio Berthoud is born; October 11: Ottilia dies. Annetta moves to Geneva to care for Silvio.
- 1937–1939 Alberto begins to make tiny figures.
- December 1941 Alberto leaves Paris for Geneva, where he stays for nearly four years.
- 1943 Alberto meets Annette Arm in Geneva.
- 1945 Alberto returns to Paris.
- 1946 Annette arrives in Paris and moves in with Alberto; July 25: Tonio dies; October: Alberto writes for the first time about the death of van Meurs (1921) in "Le rêve le sphinx, et le mort de T," *Labyrinthe*.
- 1946–1947 Alberto develops his signature style of sculpture: gaunt filiform figures.
- January 11, 1966 Alberto dies of an inflammatory heart condition.

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PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVES ON MUSIC: AN INTERSECTION ON THE ORAL AND AURAL ROAD

BY JULIE JAFFEE NAGEL

This paper is organized around two ideas. The first invites the reader to consider the importance of music in emotional life, suggesting that for some people, music can have profound, deep, and transformative effects, both in loosening defenses and in deepening the psychoanalytic experience. The second idea is that analysis of the formal properties of music have both specific and overdetermined meanings that share elements with psychoanalytic principles. I suggest that, if the verbal analysis of dreams paves a royal road to the unconscious, the formal properties of music provide an aural road to the same destination. Two clinical vignettes and scenes from Verdi's opera Otello are used to illustrate these interrelated ideas.

PART I: PRELUDE

I began a much earlier version of this paper shortly after September 11, 2001, when I was invited by my psychoanalytic institute to

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This paper is dedicated to the memory of the author's dear friend and colleague, Stuart Feder, M.D.

participate in an interdisciplinary program with the Michigan Opera Theater, which had scheduled a performance of Giuseppe Verdi's penultimate opera, *Otello* (1887a, 1887b, 1887c). As I became immersed in Verdi's music, certain scenes from the opera and my own speechless reactions to the events of that horrific September morning increasingly became associated. I realized that Verdi's music spoke to me in a way that, despite the tragedy of Boito's libretto (adapted from Shakespeare's play *Othello*) and the events of September 11, provided a sense of inner comfort (as had Leonard Bernstein's music in his composition "Age of Anxiety" after the death of my mother many years ago).

While music other than the two compositions just mentioned has affected me deeply and differently at various times in my life, and while I believe that all music can be a potential element in compromise formations for some people, I became curious about what was inherent in Verdi's music that resonated in me when words had limited value. Lipson (2006) notes that music can serve as a companion and comfort at the time of loss. McDonald (1970) has written about transitional tunes as the nonverbal, internalized musical teddy bears or blankies that serve as aural comforters, connectors, and protectors against separation, particularly from parental loss. I have long been interested in the similarities and differences between psychoanalytic and musical experience, maintaining that music, like dreams, serves as a point of entry to affect and the unconscious. Noy (1993) proposed that tone, nuance, and inflection in talk are the "music of speech" (p. 135); in the discussion to follow, the music of speech enables me to explore the language of music.

Freud discusses music in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). His first reference blurs the distinction between auditory and visual imagery, as he asserts that dreamers "make use of auditory images as well, and, to a lesser extent, of impressions belonging to the other senses," which he concludes are "residues of verbal presentations" (p. 49). Freud maintains that dreamers

. . . hallucinate—that they replace thoughts by hallucinations. In this respect there is no distinction between visual

and acoustic presentations If one falls asleep with the memory of a series of musical notes in one's mind, the memory becomes transformed into a hallucination of the same melody . . . but during waking, the hallucination gives way to the mnemonic presentation. [1900, p. 50]

While examining modes of representation in dreams, Freud refers to the "mechanism of distortion" (1900, p. 419n) in analyzing a patient whose neurotic symptoms include "songs or fragments of songs without being able to understand what part they play in her mental life" (pp. 418-419). Freud's observations do not advance our understanding of music in mental functioning or of what "fragments of songs" suggest about mental life. It appears that such phrases as "auditory images" and "mechanism of distortion" might indicate that Freud was aware, on some level, of the symbolic and metaphoric qualities of music, as later noted by Susanne Langer (1953). For some reason, he did not exhibit his customary rigorous curiosity about music and "auditory images."

Trained as a professional musician long before I became a psychoanalyst, I find that the linkage between musical and psychoanalytic concepts has always made intuitive sense to me. Yet an analysis of the formal properties of music, which have meanings specific to music itself—distinct from the analysis of an individual's response to music (or the application of psychoanalytic theory to a composer's motivations)—is a formidable endeavor; the former is not often encountered in the clinical or applied psychoanalytic literature.¹ With its specific formal and stylistic conventions, music may be considered the auditory representational world of its composer, but also of any individual. My view is that music—replete with its verbal metaphors and representations—can act as an aural stimulus both within and outside the clinical setting. Probing the system of symbols in music may contribute to an understanding of underlying mental structures in general.

Max Graf, a musicologist, psychoanalyst, and member of Freud's Wednesday Night Psychoanalytic Society, suggested that

¹ For historical overviews of psychoanalysis applied to the arts and to music in particular, see Feder (1990, 1993b).

music “functioned for the listener as a way to gain access to the unconscious and as a way to develop increasing psychic balance between the unconscious, preconscious, and conscious levels of the psyche” (Abrams 1993, p. 301).² Graf’s approach to analyzing music was based on topographical theory, according to which it was believed that music enabled the unconscious to become conscious. Historically, Graf’s 1906 study of Richard Wagner was the first published psychoanalytic study of a composer. In 1910, Graf’s first book on the psychoanalysis of music was published, in which he analyzed music composition and the psychodynamics of Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner, based on Freud’s topographical concepts.

Freud mentioned his affective reaction to Wagner’s opera *Die Meistersinger* in a letter to Fliess in 1897: “I was sympathetically moved by the ‘morning dream interpretation melody’. . . . Moreover, as in no other opera, real ideas are set to music with the tones of feeling attached to it lingering on as one reflects upon them” (Masson 1985, p. 286). That Freud was “sympathetically moved . . . by tones of feeling” confirms that he experienced an affective response to music. Consider Freud’s comments from a psychoanalytic and musical perspective in a letter he wrote to his (then) fiancée, Martha Bernays:

I remember something that occurred to me while watching a performance of *Carmen*: the mob gives vent to its appetites, and we deprive ourselves in order to maintain our integrity, we economise in ourselves, our capacity for enjoyment, our relations; and we save ourselves for something, knowing not for what. And this habit of constant suppression of natural instincts gives us the quality of refinement. [Cheshire 1996, p. 1154]

This observation about *Carmen* and Freud’s attraction to Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger* suggest a realization of libidinal containment and restraint that are inherent in music’s rules (superego representations) that govern meter, imagery, and melody (see Chesh-

² Max Graf’s son, Herbert Graf, immortalized by Freud (1909) as “Little Hans,” became the stage director of New York’s Metropolitan Opera in 1936.

ire 1996). While it is not possible to know whether Freud's reactions were about the oral aspects of the libretti, with their oedipal and preoedipal themes—and despite his famous disclaimer, “with music, I am almost incapable of obtaining any pleasure” (Freud 1914, p. 211)—I suggest that his responses, including his “displeasure” (an affect), were stimulated, in part, by the structural and formal properties of music that resonated affectively with his psychoanalytic sensitivities.

Some musicologists (Adorno 1952; Sachs 1945) have puzzled over Freud's silence about music—in fact, his dismissal of it.³ These authors suggest that Wagner's psychoanalytic themes of incest and castration, in addition to music's capacity to aurally bring unconscious to consciousness (similar to the way in which dream interpretation does this), were too close to Freud's own discoveries for comfort. Other writers have called Freud's lack of curiosity about music defensive, and/or they have maintained that he was tone deaf (see Cheshire 1996).

Prior to the 1950s, music was viewed by psychoanalysts primarily as a regressive, nonpathological experience reaching directly to primary process and the unconscious. By 1952, shifting from a topographical model toward ego mastery and the structural model, Kohut was arguing that music was related to secondary processes, serving the mature ego, yet simultaneously coexisting with primitive pleasures; explanations about music and mind now pointed to greater complexity (see Feder 1990, p. xiii).

Current thinking about the psychological functions of music maintains that applications of both the topographical and structural models are not incompatible. Ehrenzweig (1953) posited that music originates unconsciously in its creator, and, similar to a

³ Freud (1914) wrote: “Works of art do exercise a powerful effect on me, especially those of literature and sculpture, less often painting. This has occasioned me, when I have been contemplating such things, to spend a long time before them, trying to apprehend them in my own way, i.e., to explain to myself what their effect is due to. Wherever I cannot do this, as for instance with music, I am almost incapable of obtaining any pleasure. Some rationalistic, or perhaps analytic, turn of mind in me rebels against being moved by a thing without knowing why I am thus affected, and what it is that affects me” (p. 211).

dream, it is “deciphered and comprehended . . . [by the] language of the unconscious” (see Feder 1993a, p. 130). Ehrenzweig doubts that “it [can] be hoped ever to translate the symbolic message of music in rationally comprehensible words” (1953, p. 64). He further commented that:

It is not unreasonable to speculate that speech and music have descended from a common origin in a primitive language Later this primeval language would have split into different branches: music would have retained the articulation mainly by pitch (scale) and duration (rhythm), while language chose the articulation mainly by tone colour (vowels and consonants) Music has become a symbolic language of the unconscious mind. [Ehrenzweig 1953, pp. 164-165]

Friedman (1960) offers the following observation: “A musical theme represents an affect which temporarily activates some unconscious conflict” (p. 448). Noy (1967b) describes musical structure as “analogous to the dream, daydream, or joke . . . and [it] can be analyzed by psychoanalytic techniques to reveal its latent content” (p. 45). Feder’s (1993a, 1993b) work on music and mind examines music itself as a point of entry into mental processes; he explores the importance of the tonality of D minor in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, as well as the modulation from A-flat major to E major in Schubert’s *Moment Musical*, op. 94, no. 6, emphasizing the connection between affect and idea, feeling and meaning. Rose (1993, 2004) addresses developmental issues, psychoanalytic concepts, and evolving neuroscientific research as connectors between “perceptual stimuli . . . and affective meanings . . . as music provides the perceptual preconditions for affect” (1993, p. 79).

My own contributions examine musical form and structure in Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf* (Nagel and Nagel 2005), Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Nagel, in press), and Mozart’s distinctive Piano Sonata in A Minor, K. 310 (Nagel 2007). In the latter, I analyzed a piano composition (without programmatic implications, such as in *Peter and the Wolf*, or a libretto that blends words and music, such as in operas) that was composed during the sum-

mer of 1778—the tumultuous year of Mozart’s mother’s death—and I maintained, as did Mozart himself, that he expressed himself in sound.⁴ More common in the literature is the application of psychoanalytic ideas to composers themselves (see Diaz de Chumaceiro 1993; Marshall 1993; Nass 1990; Ostwald 1990), and/or to individuals’ reactions to music, such as the role of music in mourning (Stein 2004) and the sounds of memory (Stein 2007).

I have come to think that, if dreams—with their visual content and verbal analysis—are the royal road to the unconscious, then the nonverbal essence of music travels an aural road to the same destination. I do not equate verbal and nonverbal modalities, but my overarching, and perhaps provocative, theme is an expansion of Freud’s model: I believe that the qualities of *music itself* provide important *points of entry* into unconscious processes.

PART II: CLINICAL VIGNETTES

The psychoanalytic literature is far from saturated with articles about music’s effect on patients or the analysis of music itself. This is not surprising, as one would not expect psychoanalysts to be proficient in music, any more than one would expect musicians to be versed in psychoanalysis. But there is much to gain in the consulting room by tuning in to the patient’s musical experiences and the analyst’s reactions to them.

Ms. O

A patient of mine, Ms. O, enjoyed music but was not particularly musical. She did not play an instrument. At times she would refer to songs she liked. Ms. O was quite articulate, concrete, and sometimes obsessive. Her affect was within a small range, and her voice was typically a monotone. I usually experienced her as emo-

⁴ On November 8, 1777, Mozart wrote: “Dearest Papa! I cannot write in verse, for I am no poet. I cannot arrange the parts of speech with such art as to produce effects of light and shade, for I am no painter. Even by signs and gestures I cannot express my thoughts and feelings, for I am no dancer. But I can do so by means of sounds, for I am a musician.” (See Anderson 1938, p. 532.)

tionally flat and distant. Her emotional inhibitions and difficulty in becoming engaged in relationships were a major focus of our work.

One day, late into her analysis, Ms. O entered my office humming to herself. A portion of the dialogue of that session follows, as I believe it was music that enabled Ms. O to access, feel, express, and articulate emotions that had previously been unavailable to her. Music served to loosen her defenses and became a stimulus to further analytic work.

J. J. N.: I notice you were humming a tune as you came in today. [It was not usual for me to speak first, but I resonated to her music and the atypical way she had entered my office. Even though I uttered the first words, it was Ms. O who had opened the session with the first note.]

Ms. O: I didn't realize that. I went to a concert last night . . . I went by myself. It was wonderful. I know how hard it's been to bring out my emotions with you, but with music, I enjoy it . . . I get emotional . . . I feel feelings—inspiration, joy, sadness. I wish I could have shared the experience.

J. J. N.: You shared it with me as you walked in today.

Ms. O: I didn't know I was humming so loudly that you could hear. These emotions are stirred by music. I don't get stirred by many things. What is it about music? With music, I can sit in a chair, but my body can move to the beat . . . It's satisfying. I almost always have some song in my head.

J. J. N.: Do you now?

Ms. O: Oh, yeah! [She names the song.] I wonder . . . I feel empty when the room is silent. It's hard to be alone with myself. I get thoughts and music can be a distraction . . . A song in my head buffers that. If I have music with me, it's more tolerable. I called

my sister when I got home and told her that she would have enjoyed the concert.

J. J. N.: Do you think I would have, too?

Ms. O: I am sure you would. Why am I telling you this? I want to share what I experienced, and that includes with you. Usually, when I come here, I share negative thoughts with you. It's unusual that I want to share anything positive. This is such a difference. Also, with music, I can get anxious when it is silent here A song in my head eases my anxiety. I never thought to talk about it, never thought to analyze it. Music is tied to memories Why am I going back there? Why now? You'll ask, "Why now?" Music is tied to times in my life.

J. J. N.: You talk about music and earlier memories in your life. Is music tied to what you are feeling now with me?

Ms. O: It's emotional and personal. The hard part is I don't know how to articulate it It's a feeling. Music is tied to memories . . . to other times in my life. It makes me get shivers down my spine I hear sound and see and feel it like a texture I can't reproduce it. The experience involves a lot of my senses.

Lipson (2006) concludes that "thinking in music" can be "used for expressive, defensive, and adaptive purposes" (p. 877). Ms. O's associations suggest that she entered her session while thinking (unconsciously) in music, and that finding a verbal outlet via secondary process to share her experience orally was moving for her. We both felt more related to each other as her defenses loosened.

In the remainder of his session, affects and thoughts that had been unavailable emerged, particularly about her feeling too humiliated to share her deepest and most embarrassing views. She

had believed that revealing this part of her inner world would lead to my disgust and abandonment of her, which we learned was at that point connected to ending analysis and the solace that music provided during silences in the sessions. The stimulus of music had opened psychic pathways for Ms. O that enabled further analytic work to occur. Music functioned as one of many overdetermined elements that served as instruments of intrapsychic change. Analysis of her humming allowed Ms. O to achieve greater psychic integration and ego mastery (see Nass 1971; Noy 1966, 1967a, 1967b, 1967c, 1967d).

Ms. A

Another clinical vignette also illustrates a junction between music and affect in the consulting room. Ms. A had been struggling to find words to express intimate feelings toward me that had been evoked in her session. She associated to a memory from early childhood in which she tenderly recalled snow glistening under evening lights. This led to further associations about her love of sparkling jewelry, especially diamonds. The melody of the song “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” entered her mind. Her voice broke as she welled up with tears. Her associations went back to her early childhood and a faint memory of her father, with whom she had a vague recollection of a walk together on a snowy evening. He had mysteriously left the family shortly after that time, never again to make contact.

Through her tears, Ms. A softly, plaintively, and longingly began to hum and then to verbalize the words of the song: “Twinkle, twinkle, little star/How I wonder where you are/Up above the world so high/Like a diamond in the sky . . .” As I resonated to this familiar tune, silently, while listening to her, I was deeply moved by the fusion of her memory of familial togetherness and paternal longings that we could now begin to explore. Although we had worked on her father’s absence, her mother’s emotional unavailability, her yearnings, her love—all of which she felt were unrequited in the transference, it was the music that moved us to a new level of integration of these old themes. Her musical memory invited me to

viscerally and musically share her longings in the countertransference.

As I listened to Ms. A's music and words, I associated to an article on Mozart that I was writing at the time about his familial loss in the summer of 1778. During that summer, Mozart was in Paris, separated from his father and traveling with his mother, who then died. It was during this period that he composed his unique Piano Sonata in A Minor, K. 310 (see Nagel 2007), as well as a set of variations on the children's song, "Ah, vous dirais-je, Maman, K. 265"—popularly known as the "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star Variations." Ms. A and I had connected through Mozart's music.

Curiosity about affects and latent meanings as they may be related to drives and their derivatives, to object relationships, and to the functions of the ego expressed through extraordinary non-verbal—or musical—pathways provide creative ways to think about psychoanalytic theory, applied psychoanalysis, and clinical practice. As the symbolic representation of emotional life in sound, music is a vehicle on this aural road.

What allows some people, like Ms. O and Ms. A, to "think in music"? What is it about *music itself* that invites this phenomenon?

PART III: THE LANGUAGE OF MUSIC— AN ORAL/AURAL INTERSECTION

Both music and psychoanalysis involve careful listening, uniting them as aural experiences. Psychoanalysis is concerned with a symbolic verbal world; music is embedded in a symbolic sonic world.

Noy (1993) postulates that music is representational sound, directed at the sense of hearing, which "succeeds in representing . . . the whole gamut of human narratives" (p. 132). In taking the verbal road to explicate the aural road, Lansky (2007) proposes that there is something "inherently different about music from other means of artistic expression that represent something." Citing philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, Lansky offers the idea that music, of all the arts, is a "direct conveyance of the will itself, which is consonant with Freud's version of the 'unconscious wish'

—i.e., the will, the will to live, or the unconscious itself” (Lansky 2007). According to this conceptualization, music is more than another language; it is a “felt dynamic” inherent in human experience.

Exploring music from a psychoanalytic stance involves the notation and formal structure of music, which is not always readily accessible to nonmusicians. The musician is absorbed in theoretical, symbolic concepts represented by musical notation, tonal centers, ambiguous harmonies, rhythm, phrasing, melody, and other formal structures unique to its particular nonverbal language. Music evokes affects that can lead to psychic equilibrium and/or disequilibrium, pleasure and displeasure, tension and tension reduction—or, in musical terms, consonance and dissonance. Stylistic rules of composition share psychoanalytic principles, which include tension/release, silence, tempo/rhythm of speech, ambiguity, and multiple function. The description of a musical composition as *beautiful* or *moving* or *ugly* demonstrates the presence of a link pertinent to both music and psychoanalysis—i.e., between feeling and meaning (see Feder 1993b). The expression of affects and ideas evoked by music conveys something about the mental life of the listener (and also about the mental lives of the composer and the analyst, we might add). The point reemphasized here is that music can deeply affect conscious and unconscious mental processes.

Ms. O’s humming, of which she was unaware and of which I became aware, was rich with meaning, although that meaning was unknown to both of us as she entered my office. That her reaction to music was “quite different from . . . usual conscious experience,” but was nevertheless “an ever-present unconscious influence,” is consonant with Brakel’s (2003) work in primary process (p. 111), as well as with Lansky’s (2007) citation of the “will”—i.e., “*ding an sich*.”

Kohut and Levarie (1950) address psychological correlates of melody, tonality, rhythm, and repetition as they examine the elements and function of musical form, suggesting that sounds come from both external stimuli and internal sources that have—or de-

velop—affective significance through associations. In thinking developmentally about auditory sensitivity, we might note that Winnicott's concept of transitional phenomena, if applied to the aural sphere and transitional tunes (McDonald 1970), raises questions about early parent–child relationships that are cradled in meaningful, nonverbal sound spheres. For the infant, sound can be threatening or soothing, creating tension and/or relief. Mother's voice ideally becomes associated with gratification, tension reduction, and pleasure, while silence (and/or certain noises) may be threatening and anxiety producing, and evoke, by extension, a feeling of being abandoned and alone.

Recall how Ms. O used music to defend against silence, abandonment, and the fearfulness it created (“I can get anxious when it is silent here A song in my head eases my anxiety”). Not only did analysis reveal that this relationship between music and specific affects was related to her embarrassment and fear of abandonment by me, should she speak freely (related to impending termination of the analysis, as well as to earlier historical determinants); it also led to the recovery of vague memories of comforting lullabies that had been hummed to her in childhood.

Conversely, mother's or father's voice—and, by extension, fantasies about the analyst's voice—can be loud and frightening. Such was the case for Ms. O, who dreaded her father's temper. This points to the overdetermined meanings inherent in sounds as well as words. While beyond the scope of this paper, further explication of infant–parent interactions and nonverbal communication, as well as contributions from neurophysiology research, would be relevant to a deeper understanding of the functions of music in mental life.

More Than the Notes: Manifest and Latent Musical Elements

Both the content and process of music, and psychoanalysis, are attentive to manifest and latent themes and their transformations, including displacements, elaborations, dissonances, silences, paradoxes, and disruptions. With music, these elements include technical concepts, such as augmentation (lengthening note

values), diminution (shortening note values), modulation (changing to a different tonality), rhythm, orchestration, harmony, tonal centers, melody, phrasing, and repetition of motives. These elements are some of music's manifest raw materials. As such, these sonic signifiers have the capacity to evoke latent fantasies, screen memories, and bodily sensations, which in turn have the potential to link psychic past with present, affect with idea, feeling with meaning. Isn't this what we strive for in clinical work? Isn't this what Ms. O, Ms. A, and I discovered as we analyzed the melodies in their minds?

Pratt (1952) proposed that "music sounds the way emotion feels" (see Feder 1993a, p. 127). Because of its multiple function, displaceability, fluidity, and nonverbal essence, music is not reducible to any singular theory of mind. Music is a dynamic process of organized sounds that exist in notational, harmonic, rhythmic, and temporal concert time (similar to what we see in an analytic session), but it becomes part of one's internalized timelessness (as does an analytic process).

At first glance, the task of analyzing the nonverbal elements of music appears daunting. Epstein (1993) refers to a "search for the missing element," which he maintains is "not least because of the intangibility of what one seeks Often it is the affective grasp of the music that feels insufficient How does one use reason . . . to grasp what is fundamentally not understood via reason?" (p. 101). The search for the intangible and "unreasonable" is also of interest to psychoanalysts.

Composer Aaron Copland (1957) states: "Whether you listen to Mozart or Duke Ellington, you can deepen your understanding of music only by being a more conscious and aware listener—not someone who is just listening, but someone who is listening *for* something" (p. 19, italics in original). Listening "*for* something" includes the examination of tonality (e.g., harmony), which is one of many overdetermined musical techniques that provide organizing functions for sound. Tonality will be emphasized here to illustrate what is "intangible" yet audible as it pertains to Verdi's penultimate opera, *Otello* (1887a, 1887b, 1887c).

Summing up its complexities, Feder (unpublished) has defined music as a “simulacrum of mental life.” In the discussion of *Otello* that follows, I will isolate Verdi’s choices regarding specific harmonies in the “Bacio” (“Kiss”) theme in order to illustrate the use of techniques in musical language that evoke emotional responses in listeners.

PART IV: VERDI’S *OTELLO*⁵

When I first experienced *Otello*, I did not know anything about its formal musical structure, yet I felt profoundly moved, particularly by the “Bacio” melody. In attempting to articulate the essence of music and to use the symbolic notation of tonality as my sonic, theoretical “data,” I am highlighting my central premise: that compromise formations that have been preserved unconsciously are dynamically ever ready to be reawakened by internal and external stimuli, including music. In other words, my thesis is that there is an orderly process within a specific symbolic system of the musical syntax of tonality used by Verdi (an expression of the composer’s compromise formations) that evokes unconscious mental processes in listeners. Furthermore, verbal and visual representations in mental life can be enriched by sensitivity to the musical realm.

Within five minutes of the opening of Verdi’s opera, we become active participants in it. What we hear and see in the early moments of *Otello* sets the stage for what will unfold. Core issues and musically thematic material are present from the opening notes, but—as is the case with a psychoanalytic evaluation or the

⁵ It would be helpful if the reader could hear the music of the scenes discussed in this article. One of many available CDs and DVDs is included in the reference list (Verdi 1887c). The reader need not be musically trained to understand the technical implications of tonal/harmonic relationships in order to experience their expressive import.

In referring to harmonic material in *Otello*, I realize that the isolation of harmony or of any other musical technique does not do full justice to the multifaceted psychic compromises inherent in music. I am reminded here of one of my musical theory teachers, who, after many hours of formally analyzing the ambiguous opening chord in Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*, finally asked the class, “But how does it *sound*?”

opening phase of an analysis—it is unknown how these acoustic clues will develop. Lacking a prelude or overture (an unusual musical compositional gesture in itself), the opera begins with a violent storm; an anxious crowd of Cypriots wait at the dock for the arrival of their governor, returning victorious from battle against the Turks. His ship has weathered the storm, and Otello enters, strong and triumphant; he sings thirteen measures, exulting in his heroic conquest. He then immediately leaves the stage.

Dramatically, it is quite unusual for a major character in an opera to make a grand entrance without a virtuoso aria. Musically, the fierce storm that ushers in the opera begins on a dissonant cluster of notes: C, C-sharp, and D in the organ pedal, which are heard before Otello's entrance and continue until the storm has abated, fifty-three pages into the first act. The music, heard above the lowest note of the cluster (the note C), like the storm, is unsettling, and creates a sense of agitation and tension as it searches for emotional and harmonic resolution. Only later, in retrospect, we come to realize that the tonality of C, as heard in the lowest sustained note of the storm, also symbolically announces Otello's intrapsychic storm.

At first, however, it is with Otello's majestic entrance that tonal certainty—that is, the resolution of conflicted and ambiguous harmonic relationships—is achieved in the key of E major, the tonal center/home of his musical statement, which, we will discover subsequently, is the tonal center for the "Bacio" ("Kiss") music heard in Acts I and IV.

Musicologist David Lawton (1978) eloquently discusses the use of tonality among nineteenth-century opera composers, and specifically in Verdi's *Otello*, as a way to establish dramatic associations. Building upon Lawton's insightful paper, which I believe demonstrates how musical analysis and psychoanalytic analysis are compatible (and realizing that tonality is more complex than my discussion allows here), I will illustrate my theses from a psychoanalytic-musical perspective. The tonal centers of C and E are Verdi's musical techniques that are utilized as a musical pathway to convey an affective aural message. While taking into consideration

the multitude of conscious and unconscious factors that influence any composer's choices, Verdi's decision to use the tonalities C and E in the "Bacio" music is conceptualized here as an aspect of the composer's compromise formations, which have been put into play as artistic decisions and unifying devices conforming to the rules and formal requirements of music theory.^{6, 7}

The "Bacio" Theme

The "Bacio" theme first appears in Otello and Desdemona's love duet at the end of Act I, and again at the conclusion of the last act, which culminates in Desdemona's murder by Otello and Otello's suicide. Referring to the "Bacio" theme, musicologist Joseph Kerman (1968) maintains: "It is a famous dramatic stroke; many listeners . . . would have to search hard in their memory of Verdi's operas or of anyone else's to match its extraordinary feeling of summation, poignancy, and catharsis" (p. 495). This melody is introduced by the orchestra; thus, the music is heard initially without words. The "Bacio" melody is punctuated by Otello's words "*un bacio*," sung on three notes above it. Then Otello's words "*ancora un bacio*" ("still another kiss") join the melodic line only for the last six notes, and only on the third occurrence of the melody. "Bacio" concludes in E major, the tonality of Otello's first entrance in the opera.

⁶ It is not necessary to know a great deal about tonal relationships and key choices to appreciate the way Verdi uses them in the opera. My intention is to illustrate how tonality "works" to make this opera aurally and technically cohesive, powerful, and expressive; thus, in this example, the emphasis is on the tonal centers of C and E as psychic representations and compromise formations expressed in sound.

⁷ When I note that I will be illustrating how music itself is a way to tell a story, questions of methodology, evidence, and subjectivity surface. Since I have chosen opera for illustrative purposes in this paper, verbal elements must also be considered important data. Nevertheless, my thesis maintains that the elements of *music itself* can be used as psychoanalytic data; the relationship between music and psychoanalysis can also be illustrated with nonprogrammatic music.

It is important that *criteria* be stated about how one arrives at an understanding regarding the intersection of music and psychoanalysis. My objective is to involve the reader/listener in a process of raising or deepening levels of awareness about music—i.e., "what to listen *for*," as noted by Aaron Copland (1957, p. 19).

Verdi's use of "Bacio" as a "reminiscence" theme—i.e., as music in Act IV that evokes musical and emotional memory from Act I—deepens the dynamic interpersonal and intrapsychic transformations of the characters, and, I believe, accentuates our affective responses. The two bedroom scenes—the first, tender and erotic (Act I), the second, delirious and murderous (Act IV)—are unified by musical elements in which tonality choices, melody, and orchestration *foretell* (in Act I) and *recall* (in Act IV) Otello's stormy struggle with himself and with his relationship with Desdemona, ultimately uniting them in death.⁸

From the notes of the opening storm and throughout the opera, Verdi tonally conveys Otello's passion and desperation, the breakdown of his defenses, the crumbling of his psychic structure, the dissolution of object relatedness, and a musical search for tonal resolution. We listeners are caught up in the musically transformative experience as we *hear* a kiss of love become a kiss of death. The "Bacio" music itself symbolizes the core conflict of the opera.

Conflict Represented in Sound

Tonal centers established in Act I take on overdetermined and latent meanings that transmit aural clues to the characters' dynamics.⁹ C is a key that foretells tragedy for Otello from the outset. The tonal area of C also identifies Iago's character. In Act 1, when Iago tells Rodrigo that he hates Otello, his music is in the key of C, and Iago's version of the fight between Cassio and Montano opens in C. When Otello fires Cassio, premonitions of Otello's breakdown conclude in the key of C.

Lawton (1978) maintains that "Iago intends to lead Otello to C major in order to 'drag him to ruin'" (p. 215). According to his

⁸ In Act IV, the "Bacio" music is first heard in the orchestra, *without singing*, as Otello enters the bedroom through a secret door, intent on killing his wife. He finds Desdemona asleep, holding her wedding dress. As the "Bacio" theme is played, he kisses her three times before she awakens.

⁹ For a comprehensive discussion on tonal centers in the "Bacio" theme, see Lawton (1978). It was the musicologist Lawton's paper on tonal relationships in *Otello* that originally stimulated my psychoanalytic understanding of Otello's psychic conflicts; part of Lawton's musical analysis is summarized here.

analysis, in Act II, Iago sings to Otello about Desdemona's lost handkerchief as proof of her unfaithfulness predominantly in the key of C, as he whispers his malicious version of Cassio's dream. It is in C that Otello overhears Iago and Cassio whispering, sees Cassio holding Desdemona's handkerchief, and plans to strangle her (Act III). At the conclusion of Act III, Otello decompensates in the presence of the Venetian ambassadors. And Act III ends in the key of C, which aurally associates Otello and Iago while escalating tragedy mounts for Otello.

These musical gestures evoke a powerful affect in the listener (who may or may not be aware of tonality or of how Verdi uses the keys of C and E as Otello's opening tonal center announcing his arrival). During Verdi's musical working through of the opera, Otello's nobility and majesty, at first heard in the key of E, become diminished through Iago's malevolent schemes and increased associations with the tonal center C. Yet we miss Otello's intrapsychic conflicts if we focus only on Iago's manipulative duplicity. To psychoanalytically highlight these tensions from a sonic perspective, we *hear*, through C and E tonalities, a sonic version of Otello's conflict.

Recall the key of E, announcing Otello's safe, heroic arrival at the opening of the opera and the resolution of the storm. This key returns in the "Bacio" music at the end of Act I, and again at the devastating conclusion of the opera. At the end of Act I, after quelling the riot that Iago has orchestrated, Otello and Desdemona tenderly reminisce about falling in love and kiss before returning to their bed. Ominously, preceding the "Bacio" music in the first act, Otello's expression of love is tinged with his fear that "in darkness lies enshrouded what the Lord will bestow upon Otello" (Verdi 1887a, p. 104). He sings in the key of C major. The ensuing modulation to E major, where the "Bacio" theme appears, underscores musical and psychic tension.

Following the expression of Otello's misgivings, Desdemona makes a statement of her love that is affectively compelling and compositionally brilliant, recalling her marriage vows in C major (the key that is associated with Iago). The music then modulates to

the key of E and the “Bacio” theme. However, this tonality does not conclude Act I; instead, the E major statement of the “Bacio” melody modulates to the surprising and ironic key of D-flat major, to formally end Act I.

The aural and psychological effect here is that E major has not yet permanently been established as a final tonal or psychological resolution. Only in retrospect do we realize that the original tonal statement of Otello’s victorious and stormy arrival in Act I—which cadences in E (but with that ominous C, retrospectively predictive, in the organ pedal)—tonally portends that his greatness is unstable. Verdi has thus planted a sonic and psychic duality in our ears and minds early in the opera.

When the “Bacio” melody reappears at the conclusion of the tragic last act, it “resolves” Otello’s intrapsychic dilemma and the tonal ambiguities in the music, compellingly uniting music with words and affect with idea. Unlike the end of Act I, which modulates to D-flat after the E major “Bacio” theme, the “Bacio” melody in Act IV definitively ends the opera in E major. Otello’s greatness *and* his downfall are now represented in the same key.

PART V, CODA: THE AURAL ROAD

Verdi’s musical vocabulary in *Otello* speaks to complex human narratives and emphasizes the dynamic nature of the human mind. As listeners, we may experience any number of associations and conscious and unconscious reactions—possibly fright and disbelief about how the ego can become derailed by primal urges, and the wish that we could say, “not me.” The elements highlighted here, tonality being but one of the overdetermined musical carriers of meaning, evoke affects through aural channels. Music “works” because it has the capacity to bring us in touch with the vulnerabilities, strengths, and complexities of our own psyches, allowing for a regression to primal instincts as well as permission of ego mastery. Music resonates uniquely with each listener’s inner life.

If the verbal analysis of dreams paves a royal road to the unconscious, music provides an aural road to the same destination. Music has the potential to change the performer, the listener, and perhaps even itself, in that it has the capacity to create and/or re-create perspectives and affects formerly not accessible. For example, the analysis of the meaning of the tune in her head facilitated a loosening of Ms. O's defenses, as did the exploration of Ms. A's resonance to the melody of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." New meanings were discovered in old stories.

Yet what I am describing goes beyond sensitivity to musical communications in the consulting room, concert hall, or opera house. Through Verdi's *Otello*, I have attempted to examine some of the nonverbal essence of music in a composition of great sophistication as it both enhances psychoanalytic concepts and is enhanced by them. In that regard, I propose that there is an intersection in the counterpoint embedded in the melodies of mental life along the aural road to the unconscious. On this journey, I believe there is one further step. In addition to its access via an aural pathway, the unconscious has an inherent quality that is exquisitely attuned to sounds that include both words and music.

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¹⁰ This is the first in a series of articles with the same title.

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DALÍ'S HOMAGE TO ROTHKO: A DEFENSE AGAINST FUSION WITH THE VICTIM

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This paper explores the thematic content of a painting by Salvador Dalí in homage to artist Mark Rothko, completed after the latter's suicide. The manifest title of the work suggests respect for Rothko, but the latent intent of the painting, the author suggests, is more of a memorial to Rothko in a complex identification with him. Among other psychological issues, the author elaborates on two factors that may have played a part in Dalí's artistic reaction to Rothko's suicide: the death of the artist's infant brother nine months before his own birth, and his lifelong struggle against fusion with the victim (Orgel 1974a, 1974b).

INTRODUCTION

Salvador Dalí's *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean Sea Which at Twenty Meters Becomes a Portrait of Abraham Lincoln (Homage to Rothko)* was painted in 1974, four years after artist Mark Rothko's suicide. (The painting's 1976 version is reproduced as Figure 1 on p. 557.) Although the work's subtitle specifically refers to the American artist Rothko, there is no self-evident reason why the Spanish surrealist painter Dalí should have dedicated this particular work as an homage to Rothko.

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Although Mark Rothko painted in a style involving both the subject matter and the method associated with surrealism for a short period (1940-1946), philosophically, he was no surrealist (M. Rothko 2004). The thematic content of Dalí's *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean* offers similarly limited information as to a link to Rothko as a person, to his work, or to his subsequent artistic style. It is likely that the two artists were well aware of each other's work; however, there is no mention in any of the biographies of either Dalí or Rothko that the two ever met or corresponded (see, e.g., Breslin 1993). Dalí, however, made a condolence visit to Rothko's family shortly after the artist's death; he was one of the few artists to do so (C. Rothko 2006).

Dalí's condolence call may offer some suggestion as to the meaning of his homage. This paper suggests that, while the manifest intent of the painting was to pay respect to Rothko and his art, the latent intent of the painting may have been to commemorate Rothko as an artist with whom Dalí may have had a complex unconscious relationship based on Rothko's suicide. Specifically, this paper suggests significant thematic links between Dalí's personal psychological concerns and Rothko's suicide, utilizing a clinical psychoanalytic hypothesis about Dalí's personality. I shall argue that Rothko's suicide triggered in Dalí an identification with him that in turn stirred lifelong personal conflicts, dealt with creatively in this painting.

A psychoanalytic examination of Dalí's life reveals that he considered himself a replacement child, and that this may have placed him at risk for what Orgel (1974a) described as "fusion with the victim" and for suicide. I will utilize this psychoanalytic understanding to discuss the thematic content of *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean*—particularly its two double images. I will show that the painting can be seen as a creative expression of Dalí's ability to struggle against complex identifications with lost, idealized, or hated objects that he perceived as victims of violent death, and to ward off his own murderous wishes directed against the self in an effort not to succumb to depression and suicide.

In order to fashion this paper's argument, I will first outline a methodology for applying psychoanalytic concepts to artistic works, particularly as put forth by Baudry (1984). Here I will briefly touch on some of the art historical material on this painting in the context of this psychoanalytic approach. Next, I will draw out a number of important details about Dalí's life that are crucial to understanding his conscious view of suicide, as well as some of the factors influencing his personal, emotional, and perhaps unconscious reactions to Rothko's suicide. Finally, I will integrate these various factors into my analysis of the painting itself.

METHODOLOGY

Psychoanalytic approaches to art differ from both conventional art histories and psychoanalysis itself. Art historical approaches to *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean*, for example, have largely focused on the expression of themes that Dalí developed early in his career and continued to expand in the postwar period. These include the "paranoid-critical" philosophy in which the "paranoiac" may recognize hidden significance in matters of everyday life, the relativity of visual perception, and the mechanics of representing perception. This painting is seen as an integration of the technology of perception through the application of digital photography and computer graphics to painting; it also joins Dalí's paranoid-critical philosophy with his so-called nuclear mysticism and his turn toward religion and the Catholic Church (Hine and Kropf 2005; Moorhouse 1990).

The critics who have most closely examined *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean*, Hine and Kropf (2005), argue that the portrait of Lincoln within the work is an homage to the United States, which became Dalí's home during World War II and the place where he achieved fame and fortune. They point out that the Spanish Civil War had parallels for Dalí with the American Civil War, and that it was Americans who formed the Abraham Lincoln "Brigade" (actually a Battalion), which fought in the Spanish Civil War

on the Republican side. Most important, Hine and Kropf argue that the square, multicolored Spanish tiles that make up the wall surrounding the cruciform window in the painting, and that form the pixels of Lincoln's portrait, echo Rothko's famous rectangular color-field paintings.

I will offer some additional speculations about this possible artistic link between Dalí and Rothko in what follows. My purpose in this paper is to supplement such art historical analyses of Dalí's art with an analysis based on psychological considerations.

A work of art cannot be psychoanalyzed as such because the methodology of clinical psychoanalysis cannot be utilized without the subject's associations and reactions to interventions. Moreover, psychoanalyzing the artist outside the clinical situation is beset with many other methodological problems as well. In order to build a psychoanalytic framework for my study, I have relied on Baudry's (1984) outline of the four ways in which analysts have sought to apply psychoanalysis to a work of art outside the usual clinical situation with a live patient. These include: first, ignoring the as-if nature of the artistic work and treating the work as a case history; second, relating the work to the artist's mental state and viewing the work as a modified form of free association; third, regarding the work in its own right and carrying out a thematic analysis; and, finally, dealing with the reactions of the audience to the aesthetic effect. For the purposes of this paper, I have chosen a combination of approaches two and three.

In order to implement this methodology, I have relied heavily on several biographies of Dalí and the psychologically sophisticated art historical work on Dalí the artist (Ades and Bradley 1998; Ades and Taylor 2005; Etherington-Smith 1992; Gibson 1997; Moorhouse 1990; Rojas 1993; Secrest 1986). I have also used passages from the artist's autobiographies, written in a deliberately "free-associative" style, as one would use associations in analysis. Particularly because Dalí was constantly in the process of self-consciously creating and maintaining his sense of identity, his life as he

wrote it is more a self-created myth than a set of facts. Indeed, since Dalí himself quite consciously saw his paintings as forms of free association in the first place, if there ever was an artist for whom this kind of analysis might be applied, it would be he.

I have chosen to try to add to the understanding of this particular painting by delving into Dalí's affinity with Rothko, calling attention to the key psychological issues that I believe inform the artist's *intention* (see Freud 1914 in this regard) in this work: the psychology of the replacement child, the psychological mechanisms of the struggle against fusion with the dead victim (Orgel 1974a, 1974b), and identification with the doer (Segel 1969).

SALVADOR DALÍ AS A REPLACEMENT CHILD

Salvador Felipe y Jacinto Dalí Domènech was born on May 13, 1904, in Figueres, Spain, nine months and eleven days after the death of his brother, Salvador Galo Anselmo Dalí Domènech, aged twenty-one months, from an "infectious gastro-enteritic cold" (Gibson 1997). Dalí (1942) attributes great significance to this connection between them, although in his autobiography, he distorts his brother's age, the time span between his own birth and his brother's death, and the disease that took his life:

My brother died at the age of seven [*sic*] from an attack of meningitis [*sic*], three years before I was born [*sic*]. His death plunged my father and mother into the depths of despair; they found consolation only upon my arrival into the world. My brother and I resembled each other like two drops of water but we had different reflections. Like myself he had the unmistakable facial morphology of a genius. He gave signs of alarming precocity, but his glance was veiled by the melancholy characterizing insurmountable intelligence My brother was probably a first version of myself, but conceived too much in the absolute. [p. 2]

There is some controversy about whether Dalí was named after his dead brother. Ades and Taylor (2005) seem to agree with Dalí's claim that this was the case, though Gibson (1997) argues that he was not; by family tradition, male children often bore the name Salvador (meaning *savior* in Spanish) in some form. Dalí's full name indicates that he was also named after his mother, Felipa, and a maternal uncle, Jacinto. The dead brother's second name, Galo, was given in honor of Dalí's paternal grandfather, who committed suicide, and his third name, Anselmo, was that of a maternal uncle (facts that will become important later in my analysis).

Dalí's description of his birth and his naming contain factual errors and must be regarded as self-constructed mythology, and possibly as the product of psychological conflict. By his own account, Dalí came to feel himself to be a replacement child, and he idealized the dead brother with attributes that a 21-month-old could not have actually displayed in his short life. Dalí may also have felt like a *replaced* child, given that his sister was born when he was three.

The replacement-child syndrome has generated a significant child psychiatric and psychoanalytic literature (Ainslie and Solyom 1986; Anisfeld and Richards 2000; Cain and Cain 1964; Legg and Sherick 1976; Nagera 1967; Niederland 1965; Poznanski 1972; Sabbadini 1988; Volkan and Itzkowitz 1984; Wilson 1988). Though all children born to parents who have lost a child are, of course, "replacements" in some sense, strictly speaking, the designation of *replacement child* refers to one whose parents made a conscious decision to conceive a child in order to replace a child who died a short time earlier. The replacement-child syndrome is part of the larger issue of sibling loss more generally, as well as the loss of important objects (Nagera 1970). While the literature describes the conflicts, risks, and vulnerabilities that all families and children involved in replacement face, the specific ways in which these issues are handled are, of course, quite variable from family to family and child to child.

Dalí is not alone; a number of well-known figures have identified themselves and been identified as replacement children. Vincent van Gogh, for example, was a replacement child, deliberately named after his dead brother, and his tragic suicide has been discussed by psychoanalysts in light of this fact (Meissner 1992; Nagera 1967). The French writer Marie-Henri Beyle (better known as Stendhal) was also a replacement child (Wilson 1988), as were Atatürk (Volkan and Itzkowitz 1984) and Heinrich Schliemann, the archaeologist who discovered ancient Troy (Niederland 1965). Unfortunately, we have few accounts of the effects of sibling death on personality development in earlier eras when the rate of infant mortality was much greater.

Recognition of the difficulties that replacement children have in common in our own time and culture began with the pioneering study of Cain and Cain (1964), who studied six cases in depth. They found that parents who attempt to replace a dead child are dominated by images and memories of the dead child, and also that the replacement children are themselves haunted by the image of the dead child. Successful mourning is abandoned in favor of replacement.

Perhaps the most in-depth analysis of an artist who was a replacement child is Nagera's (1967) study of the life and suicide of Vincent van Gogh. Vincent was born exactly a year to the day after his sibling's death, and given exactly the same name as his brother who had died. Nagera observed that Vincent's parents idealized the dead baby, who never had an identity; for Vincent, competition with the dead child was impossible and became combined with feelings of responsibility for the death, causing him to associate success with death. To be recognized as better than the dead Vincent, the live Vincent felt he had to become dead also. His suicide occurred shortly after the birth of his nephew, also named Vincent van Gogh.

This is an example of how the replacement child may have difficulty with the achievement of a viable identity separate from that

of the dead sibling (Erikson 1959; Sabbadini 1988). Van Gogh's case also illustrates the fact that replacement children often harbor fantasies of guilt and responsibility, both for the psychic distress of the parents and for the death of the sibling.

Dalí provided us with ample material to understand how this worked in his own self-fashioning, as he wrote about being a replacement child throughout his life. He later added important details to his earlier account:

As is known, three years [*sic*] after the death of my seven year old [*sic*] elder brother, my father and mother at my birth gave me the same name, Salvador, which was also my father's. This subconscious crime was aggravated by the fact that in my parents' bedroom—an attractive, mysterious, redoubtable place, full of ambivalence and taboos—there was a majestic picture of Salvador, my dead brother, next to a reproduction of Christ crucified as painted by Velázquez; and this image of the cadaver of the Savior whom Salvador had without question come to in his angelic ascension, conditioned in me an archetype born of four Salvadors who cadaverized me. The more so as I turned into a mirror image of my dead brother. I thought I was dead before I knew I was alive. The three Salvadors reflecting each other's images, one of them a crucified God twinned with the other who was dead and the third a dominating father, forbade me from projecting my life into a reassuring mold and I might say from even constructing myself. At an age when sensibilities and imagination need an essential truth and a solid truth, I was living in the labyrinths of death which became my "second nature." I had lost the image of my being that had been stolen from me; I lived only by proxy and reprieve. [Dalí and Parinaud 1973, p. 241]

We might see this as an unusual example of what Erikson (1959) termed *identity diffusion*, and it may describe Dalí's psychological struggle to achieve a stable sense of himself throughout his life. Of particular note are his references to his dead brother as the mirror image of himself (Dalí and Parinaud 1973), and to the

two of them as being as alike as two drops of water (Dalí 1942). He may also be suggesting in the above quotes that his brother was a first version of himself, whom he killed off in order that the more finished version, Dalí himself, could live and become immortal through his art. This passage also describes associations between the dead brother, the crucifixion of Christ, and the parents' bedroom—themes that will be elaborated in my analysis of Dalí's painting *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean*.

Sabbadini's (1988) summary of the psychology of the replacement child uses statements from Dalí's autobiography to illustrate her point of view. She presents a case in psychoanalysis of a woman who was born nine months after the death of her sister. The parents had wanted to name the patient after her dead sister, but at the last minute changed their minds. Sabbadini's analysis of the woman emphasized the role of her replacement status in establishing and maintaining her sense of identity, and in her proclivity to experiences of depersonalization, including a preoccupation with the double (*Doppelgänger*)—"whereby one feels that one exists in symbiotic complement with someone else, with a twin who is the mirror image of oneself" (1988, p. 528). The belief in the double is made possible by the mechanism of splitting self and object representations into idealized/denigrated, dead/alive fantasy images.

Sabbadini (1988) explains the replacement child's preoccupation with the double in terms of the experience of the dead child as an omnipresent guest/ghost:

In order to cope with this kind of situation, a child might elaborate to an abnormal degree some specific fantasies that are also common in normal children: for instance, that a double exists somewhere, which is one's real self, and of which one is only a shadow or a dim mirror reflection. This double has strong narcissistic connotations, and as "immortal self" it has the function of defending the ego from the fear of death and annihilation. Having already died, Angela (Jill's double) provided her with an aura of immortality which would protect her from her own destructive and self-destructive impulses. [p. 537]

Brok (2006) called attention to Dalí's status as a replacement child in his speculations about the artist's visit to Freud in 1938, and his sketch of Freud as near death. Dalí was preoccupied with the theme of the double; he had read Rank's (1925) treatise on the subject and felt it applied to him.

As noted, replacement children often feel responsible for the death of the dead sibling (Nagera 1967). Dalí (1969) told an interviewer: "Every day, I kill the image of my poor brother I assassinate him regularly, for the 'Divine Dalí' cannot have anything in common with this former terrestrial being" (p. 32). Dalí identified both with his dead brother and with the imagined forces that killed ("assassinated") him. It also seems apparent that this doubling process, so well described by Dalí, involves a "dead" and an "immortal" self-representation.

The inability for the replacement child to consolidate a firm sense of identity, as well as the dead-self/immortal-self split, is important in understanding themes in Dalí's life and art. In what follows, I link Dalí's preoccupation with the double to his relationship to his dead brother and explore his use of double images in his paintings.

IDENTIFICATION AND FUSION WITH THE VICTIM: DALÍ'S FAMILY LIFE, THE THEME OF SUICIDE, AND HIS ART WORK

We know that the attainment of stable self and object representations is crucial to the achievement of identity and other aspects of psychological health. However, because identification with aspects of the mothering figure, and later the fathering figure, begins early in life, we all retain the capacity to regress to these early, "primitive" identifications. Such regressions are apt to occur not only in times of stress, but also in moments of sexual ecstasy, substance intoxication, and in group experiences involving religion, spirituality, or mysticism, as well as in emotional reactions to artistic productions. Winnicott (1953) seems to have had this in mind when he

wrote about transitional phenomena. These experiences may involve fantasies or experiences of merger or fusion with early objects or relationships.

Orgel (1974a, 1974b) elaborated a defensive position that he called *fusion with the victim*; he connected it with a complex view of suicide. He wrote:

Fusion with the victim corresponds to an exact opposite of identification with the aggressor, although defences against it may take the form of identification with the aggressor itself and paranoid reactions; and decompensation may lead to symptoms resembling melancholia. The idealized object, still largely fused with the primary narcissistic self, is seen not as omnipotent, but as a victim; while the subject, instead of turning passivity into activity and externalizing the aggression or imitating the aggressor, turns the aggression against himself, becoming one with the victim-object. [1974a, pp. 531-532]

Orgel went on to explain that a tendency to employ this kind of defense creates conditions that favor regression in the height of the oedipal phase, in adolescence, or in the case of a parent's death in later childhood. He described fusion with the victim as the earliest infantile prototype of many presuicidal states in later life.

Orgel (1974a) also posited that one of the preconditions for fusion with the victim is the caregiver's failure to provide a limit-setting response to the six- to fifteen-month-old's aggressive demands—a response that is necessary in order to provide a “reliable aggressive resonance” (p. 531). He illustrated these ideas in a careful study of the poet Sylvia Plath, utilizing the facts of her life, as well as her poems, as evidence of his assertions (Orgel 1974b).

Orgel's ideas may have considerable relevance to Dalí. Replacement children are more likely to have parents who cannot provide “aggressive resonance” because they are in mourning. They frequently overly indulge the live child out of fear that their own aggression (saying “no”) will harm or kill the new baby, and also as

a defense against blaming the replacement child for the first child's death (Sabbadini 1988). We know that, during Dalí's early childhood, his mother asked him each morning what he desired, and then sought to meet all of his requests (A. M. Dalí 1949; S. Dalí 1942). He described an early memory of being given a king's costume, which he wore around the house while he ordered everyone about, and which became the prototype for the outlandish costumes he wore for most of his life (Gibson 1997). The artist's parents had great difficulty in dealing with his rages and most often gave in to his demands. His sister Ana María—born when he was three—described major temper tantrums through which Dalí was able to control both of his parents (A. M. Dalí 1949).

Though Dalí himself described a scene in which he cruelly kicked his sister in the head (1942, p. 12), her own autobiography is careful to refute tales of his cruelty and aggression toward her (A. M. Dalí 1949). According to Ana María, their parents' solution to dealing with Dalí's increasingly difficult personality was to either ignore him or indulge him, most often the latter. Some of the incidents reported in his autobiography include that he "deliberately" wet the bed and would spread his own feces around the house on a whim until he was seven years old. It is possible that he suffered from enuresis and encopresis, but he preferred to believe that he was in control of these bodily functions.¹

Dalí may have been overindulged by his mother, but we know that his relationship with his father—whom he saw as tyrannical—was more problematic. Dalí's father held the prestigious position of town notary in Figueres, and the large and imposing figure he cast over his son's life is represented in Dalí's *Portrait of my Father* (1925). Though the boy did not do well in formal school settings, his family, including his father, encouraged his prodigious artistic gifts. Indeed, his father kept a scrapbook containing reports of his son's achievements until 1929—the year of a major rupture in

¹ My purpose in outlining some of these issues is neither to confirm nor to deny the varying accounts, but rather to try to understand some of the family dynamics; they also give a sense of the artist's early wishes.

their relationship caused by his father's disapproval of Dalí's affair with Elena (nicknamed "Gala"), the wife of poet Paul Éluard. In this same year, Dalí's father disinherited him, and after this the artist regarded his father as threatening and vengeful (Ades and Taylor 2005). This is also the year in which Dalí claimed that he realized he was a genius (Dalí 1942).

The complex connections between Dalí and his father can be seen in the contradictions in their relationship. For example, a good deal of the biographical and art historical material on their relationship emphasizes Dalí's own characterizations of his father as tyrannical, castrating, and even murderous toward his son (see, especially, Ades and Bradley 1998; Ades and Taylor 2005; Rojas 1993). One source notes, however, that Dalí wrote that his father was the man whom he most admired and imitated, and pointed out that he often painted father-son pairs in positive poses, even sexualized embraces (Ades and Bradley 1998, pp. 39-50). In his autobiographies, Dalí mentioned admiration and love for his father, but this was deemphasized in favor of descriptions that seek to establish his father as given to outbursts of temper, and as one who consorted with prostitutes and threatened his son with castration. The wish to win his father's love away from his dead brother was never explicitly acknowledged by Dalí (Rojas 1993).

The ten years after Dalí's mother's death from cancer during his adolescence were fraught with psychological difficulties. In his 1942 autobiography, he described her death as an enormous blow, and wrote that he had determined he would one day free her from the claws of death, and his name would become immortal. Determined during this period to become an artistic genius, Dalí finished secondary school with good grades; his artistic ambitions seem to have been emotionally linked to coping with his mother's death (Gibson 1997; Rojas 1993). His father agreed to his career as an artist as long as he trained in Madrid, and he was accepted by a school of fine arts there, the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Though contemptuous of his teachers, the young Dalí was socially accepted by a group of students there, in-

cluding Luis Buñuel, Federico García Lorca, and others who were to become the cultural avant-garde in Spain and later in Europe.

But Dalí was suspended from art school, returned home, and was then arrested and jailed as a troublemaker during the political unrest in Catalonia. While it is difficult to establish a direct link between his mother's death and his subsequent troubles in art school, there is evidence that he was in search of a viable sense of himself, as manifested by his outlandish costumes, his run-ins with artistic and political authorities, and his desire to be accepted by his peers at all costs.

In this same period, Dalí remained haunted by his dead brother, with whom he seemed to be primitively identified, judging from his autobiographical account. This is perhaps also revealed in Dalí's artistic style and artistic philosophies, which involved fluid perceptual images, double images, figure-ground mergers, and a concern for the fragmented elements that can be perceived as a unit to make up a whole image. In *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean*, for example, the use of a number of fragmented pixels enables the apprehension of a human face. The painting's picture-within-a-picture element illustrates the same theme.² Other Dalí paintings use the theme of atomic particles, strands of DNA, or even cherries in the same way, a notable example being *A Portrait of My Dead Brother* (1963). Such artistic themes echo the fragmentation of identity with which Dalí struggled, and which Orgel (1974a, 1974b) described in his concept of fusion with the victim.

THE ARTIST'S PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES AND HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH LORCA

Salvador Dalí's relationship with Federico García Lorca is significant in understanding the psychological processes at work in his art.

² Balter's (2006) paper on this phenomenon in dreams and works of art is quite relevant to Dalí's painting. Balter argues that the picture-within-a-picture theme may deny a painful reality, or it may both affirm *and* deny that reality, or

Almost seven years older than Dalí, Lorca was a well-regarded poet and a homosexual. Dalí and Lorca began their homoerotic friendship when the former was sixteen years old, about a year after the death of Dalí's mother; they were particularly close for about seven years between 1922 and 1928. Therefore, as an adolescent, the artist lost his mother, left home for the first time, and established a close relationship with a man seven years older that was to last for seven years. Although Lorca may have wanted his connection with Dalí to be more than a platonic one, it is unclear whether a sexual relationship between them was ever consummated (Gibson 1997).

Dalí represented their relationship in his artistic productions. Art historians have identified his use of the figure of St. Sebastian as the artist's alter ego as a "metaphorical representation of the friendship linking him to [Lorca]" (Ades and Taylor 2005). St. Sebastian was the patron saint of Cadaqués, a seaside town near Dalí's home, who was martyred by Roman soldiers and became the protector of homosexuals during the Renaissance. With St. Sebastian, we see again the theme of martyred sacrifice linked to emotional closeness. Dalí painted several works during the period of his friendship with Lorca that critics have seen as related to his fondness for Lorca, who reciprocated this affection in an ode to Dalí published in 1926.

As Dalí grew more interested in surrealism, however, he broke off his connection to Lorca. The manifest reason for this break was Lorca's publication of *Romancero Gitano* (*Gypsy Ballads*) in 1928, a work that Dalí regarded as antithetical to his new artistic vision (Ades and Taylor 2005). More speculatively, Dalí may have become conflicted about his own sexual orientation, as Gibson (1997) suggested.

Though their close relationship was long over at the time, Dalí (1942) wrote that Lorca was a "sacrificial victim" of the Spanish Civil War when he was arrested and killed by a firing squad of the

may state the problem of what is real or true. All these are relevant Dalinian themes.

Franco regime in 1936 (p. 361). I maintain that Dalí may have associated Lorca's death with that of his brother, another innocent "sacrificial victim," and that, in turn, the artist associated Rothko's death with both his brother's and Lorca's demise. A number of facts lead to this conclusion. First, Lorca was older than Dalí by the same number of years that he imagined to be the age difference between himself and his dead brother. Second, Lorca was preoccupied with and anticipated his own early death, a fact that led one critic (Rojas 1993) to claim that Lorca represented a "reincarnation" of Dalí's deceased brother, supported by the argument that Dalí's attraction to Lorca began after he witnessed the poet fake his own death in an elaborate ceremony in a student dormitory.

Moreover, Lorca was the outstanding figure of Dalí's student peer group, admired and completely accepted even by Dalí's father, who declared the poet a genius and introduced him to his friends. The senior Dalí's declaration of Lorca as a genius echoes Dalí's own more implausible characterization of his deceased baby brother as a genius. The length of the Dalí-Lorca friendship was seven years, the age at which his brother had died in the artist's distorted chronology, and the number of years of the age difference between Lorca and Dalí. Finally, Dalí's painting *Portrait of My Dead Brother* (1963) is said by some critics to resemble García Lorca as a young man (Rojas 1993).

The Break with Lorca and Psychological Decompensation

These details provide the context for the psychological decompensation that Dalí suffered after the dissolution of his close relationship with Lorca, which bore many of the characteristics that Orgel (1974a, 1974b) described in his concept of fusion with the victim. What is known about Dalí's particular symptoms and experiences comes mostly from Dalí himself, and thus must be considered a mixture of fact and fantasy—much as we might approach the associations of a patient in analysis.

A particular incident in the spring of 1929 well illustrates his breakdown. Dalí was in Paris following the making of the film *Un*

Chien Andalou, on which he had collaborated with Luis Buñuel. He reports that a fellow Spanish artist, Joan Miró, showed him around the city, and that he visited many brothels because he was eagerly searching for an "elegant" woman. In his account, he fell ill with "tonsillitis," and was alone in his room one day when he developed the idea that he had been bitten in the back by a tick. He writes:

It was as if formed of my own flesh, as if it constituted an inherent and already inseparable part of my own body; as if, suddenly, instead of an insect, it had become a terrifying germ of a tiny embryo of a Siamese twin-brother that was in the process of growing out of my back, like the most apocalyptic and infernal disease. [Dalí 1942, p. 214]

He tried to cut out the tick with a razor blade, but succeeded only in cutting his back open, with a good deal of blood loss. He summoned a maid, who called a doctor. By this time, Dalí realized that the "tick" was actually a birthmark he had seen many times before, and the doctor confirmed this.

After this incident, the artist became pessimistic and depressed about ever finding a woman of any kind, and eventually left for Spain. On the night before he left Paris, he met the poet Paul Éluard, whom he described as a "legendary being . . . absorbed in looking at beautiful women" (Dalí 1942, p. 217). He compared him to Lorca in importance as a poet.

Arriving back in Spain, Dalí set up his studio in Cadaqués, and he reports that he began to be "assailed by a recrudescence of my childhood" (Dalí 1942, p. 219). Intense fantasies and unbidden images from childhood became elements in his artistic work that summer. He describes a momentary hallucination of a tall woman wearing a nightgown, and after that incident, he began to have "fits" of laughter. The laughter occurred in response to intrusive fantasies. For example, he would laugh when imagining someone he knew with an owl perched on his head and having a bowel movement. This tendency to have fits of laughter lasted several weeks, through the visit of Paul Éluard and his wife Elena (whose nickname was Gala).

Dalí's break with Lorca coincided with his adoption of a surrealist artistic identity, as well as with his articulation of a conscious desire for a heterosexual orientation, the quest to "find an elegant woman." The break with Lorca and the anxiety-arousing prospect of consummating a heterosexual relationship appear to have occasioned both his depression and his self-injurious behavior in Paris. These internal struggles resulted in paintings displaying some of Dalí's most transparently Freudian themes: *The First Days of Spring* (1929), *The Great Masturbator* (1929), *The Enigma of Desire* (1929), *Accommodations of Desire* (1929), and *Illuminated Pleasures* (1929). The art historical commentaries on the works painted around the time of his first meeting with Elena (Gala) focus on the artist's struggle with heterosexual desire and the castration anxiety it aroused in him. This literature also points to the oedipal aspects of Dalí's father's opposition to his son's relationship with an older, married woman (Ades and Taylor 2005).

While these interpretations are plausible, I believe that Dalí's laughing fits could be viewed as a hypomanic defense against depression, associated with the loss of his relationship with Lorca. They are also likely to have been a further development of his self-injurious attack on the "Siamese twin-brother tick" that "attacked" him in Paris during his search for the "elegant woman." This further suggests a primitive identification with his mother during her pregnancy with his soon-to-be-dead brother, as well as an identification with the brother himself. My interpretation here is consistent with Orgel's (1974a, 1974b) description of fusion with the victim—the victim in this case being both the dead mother and the dead brother. The precipitant for the regressive decompensation is not just castration anxiety, but also the fear of loss of the early mothering object as well.

Both the tick's attack on Dalí and Dalí's attack on the tick seem to illustrate Orgel's postulated concept rather well. Those predisposed to fusion with the victim regress at times of loss of important objects; this may take the form of paranoia, melancholia, or, as in this case, the form of a paranoid attack followed by a hypo-

manic reaction to object loss. In Dalí's case, the experience of meeting and courting his future wife had a profound effect on these symptoms, as well as on the subsequent course of his life.

FALLING IN LOVE WITH GALA

Dalí's psychological decompensation and romance with Elena (Gala) Diakona Éluard, occurring only six months after his break with Lorca, in many ways parallels the way in which he became involved with Lorca so soon after his mother's death. After each significant loss, Dalí moved on to a new, important relationship within a short time. The relationship with Gala marked a major turning point in Dalí's life. They met when she visited Cadaqués, though she was known to Dalí by reputation before this trip, as she occupied her own important place in the surrealist movement; she was undoubtedly a glamorous and important figure for him even before he met her.

Very little is known about Gala's life before her marriage to Éluard and her subsequent celebrity in the surrealist movement. Nine years older than Dalí, she had been the lover of numerous artists and poets; she had a "free-love" arrangement with her husband. During her visit to Cadaqués with Éluard and their daughter Cecile, Gala met Dalí, pursued him sexually, and decided to abandon her family to pursue their deepening relationship.³

Their courtship was strange and fraught with ambivalence. Visitors to Cadaqués were concerned about Dalí's laughing fits and his general psychological condition (although his father and sister were not). Gala was chosen to find out whether Dalí was coprophagic; there was concern about the frankly anal content of the artist's current painting, *Le Jeu Lugubre* ("The Lugubrious Game") (1929)—as well as the fact that Dalí arrived for his first walk with Gala smeared with his own dried blood and goat manure!

³ For additional information about Gala, see Bradley (1998) and Lubar (2000, pp. 77-78).

In the initial period of their relationship, Dalí experienced intense fantasies of murdering Gala, and she in turn explicitly asked him to murder her (Dalí 1942). At this time, the artist's laughing fits abated, never to return. It is difficult to explain this clinical "cure"; my speculation is that Dalí was able to use Gala as an identification object more in line with identification with the aggressor or identification with the doer (Segel 1969), thus rendering his tendency to fusion with the victim less necessary.

This shift in identification is borne out by other factors in Dalí's relationship with Gala. First, he completely idealized her, allowing her to represent a personal renaissance in his life: "One single being has reached a plane of life whose image is comparable to the serene perfections of the Renaissance, and this being happens to be precisely Gala, my wife, whom I had the miracle to choose" (Dalí 1942, p. 4). Almost immediately after they met, Gala began to function as the major organizing figure in Dalí's life, taking on the role of his lifelong companion, muse, business manager, mistress, book editor, model, and idealized mother (Ades and Taylor 2005, p. 437; Bradley 1998).

The artist further described her in this way:

Gala, Éluard's wife. It was she! Galuchka Rediviva!⁴ I had just recognized her by her bare back. Her body still had the complexion of a child's. Her shoulder blades and the sub-renal muscles had that somewhat sudden athletic tension of an adolescent's. But the small of her back, on the other hand, was extremely feminine and pronounced, and served as an infinitely svelte hyphen between the willful, energetic and proud leanness of her very delicate buttocks which the exaggerated slenderness of her waist enhanced and rendered greatly more desirable. [Dalí 1942, p. 229]

⁴ Dalí linked the name *Gala*, Elena's childhood nickname, to "Galuchka Rediviva," a reborn love based on an imaginary Russian girl (Galuchka), about whom he claimed to have developed an elaborate fantasy in childhood (Dalí 1942). This intricately constructed personal mythology of dubious veracity further joined their fates, personalities, and identities.

Here Dalí describes her as having both masculine and feminine characteristics, and associates her with a child as well as an adolescent, revealing possible echoes of his brother, of Lorca, and of himself. The artist became completely dependent on her; he never wrote a check, paid a bill, or booked a reservation. Art historians have described her as both a primal mother and a paternal representation for Dalí—a phallic mother or an omnipotent figure without gender (Lubar 2000, p. 78).

These speculations aside, upon developing a serious relationship with Gala, Dalí also developed a complex mythology for the two of them, just as he had done for himself. Almost immediately after their marriage in 1934, he began to merge their identities and life stories. He began to sign his paintings *Dalí-Gala*. These circumstances have led some biographers to view Gala as the artist's twin or double (Secrest 1986). Dalí himself described her as "the salt of my life, the steel of my personality, my beacon, my double—ME" (Secrest 1986, pp. 114-115).

It seems, then, that Dalí developed an almost immediate primitive identification with Gala, but one that was the opposite of fusion with the victim. The artist saw his wife not as a victim, but as a doer—a woman of steel, a beacon, a healer. This identification seems to have had the effect of reversing his psychological compensation and allowing the artist to consolidate his fluid and shaky identity, as well as to find the strength to break with his father and sister and to overcome the losses of Lorca and his mother. In fact, the artist associated his acceptance of himself as an artistic genius, destined for immortality, with the beginning of his relationship with Gala (Dalí 1942, p. 2).

In addition to the significance that Dalí attached to the name *Gala* as part of his childhood fantasy (see footnote 4), there were other connections to her name that made his connection to the woman herself all the more emotionally salient. It should be recalled, for example, that *Galo* was the second name of Dalí's dead brother, *Gallo* was the name of a magazine Lorca published in

1928, and *Gal* was the name of his paternal grandfather who had died by suicide. It must have seemed like a miracle when the glamorous Gala appeared in Cadaqués, just when the young artist was desperately looking for love. Indeed, Dalí was saved from his sexual dilemmas by Gala; she provided him with a heterosexual identity. She may have been the only woman with whom he was able to have a sexual relationship (Etherington-Smith 1992; Gibson 1997; Moorhouse 1990); thus, she “saved” him from homosexuality, as represented by his relationship with Lorca.

DALÍ'S RELATIONSHIP TO SUICIDE

The connections between Dalí's wife, Gala, and death—and, in particular, with suicide as represented by Dalí's paternal grandfather, Gal Josep Salvador Dalí—are crucial to my understanding of Dalí's reaction to Rothko's suicide and how this informed his *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean*. His grandfather's suicide at the age of thirty-six, carried out by jumping from a third-floor balcony, was a family secret, hidden from Dalí until he was a young adult (Gibson 1997). His grandfather had suffered from a bout of what was called “persecution mania,” and had lost money in the Barcelona stock exchange. Dalí's paternal uncle Rafal tried to kill himself later in exactly the same way, but survived. These incidents are not mentioned in any of Dalí's writings.

Dalí himself worried that he would be afflicted by his grandfather's and uncle's suicidal “paranoia” (Gibson 1997). Although, ideologically, Dalí was explicitly opposed to suicide and never succumbed to overt suicidal acts, he flirted with it throughout his life. For example, he describes instances in adolescence when he would throw himself down flights of stairs in order to get attention from his fellow students at school, sustaining injuries, though none was life threatening (Dalí 1942). Whether fact or fantasy, these episodes are significant for their self-injurious character, as was his attempt to surgically remove the “tick” birthmark.

After Gala's death in 1982, Dalí seemed to let himself die; he went into a mental and physical decline and suffered from an in-

creasingly deep depression before finally dying himself in 1989, at the age of eighty-four, of heart failure. Though he had not actively attempted suicide after Gala's death, he was badly burned when an "accident" with an electric buzzer system caused a fire in his bedroom, and at one point he deliberately dehydrated himself (Gibson 1997).

Not only was his family history of suicide to have an impact on the artist; in addition, several of his contemporaries in the surrealist movement committed suicide. Perhaps most important, Dalí's friend René Crevel (who was born the year before Dalí's brother) took his own life in June 1935, one year after Dalí married Gala. There are a number of possible links between Crevel's suicide and Dalí's view of Mark Rothko's suicide. Dalí wrote the introduction to Crevel's posthumously published *La mort difficile* (*The Difficult Death*) at the same time he was painting *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean*.

Dalí (1942) wrote about Crevel's suicide in political, not psychological, terms:

He [Crevel] remained distant from our group, and shortly after committed suicide, despairing of the possibility of solving the dramatic contradictions of the ideological and intellectual problems confronting the Post-War [World War I] generation. Crevel was the third surrealist who committed suicide, thus corroborating their affirmative answer to a questionnaire that had been circulated in one of the first issues by the magazine *La Revolution Surrealiste*, in which it was asked, "Is suicide a solution?" I had answered no, supporting this negation with the affirmation of my ceaseless individual activity. The remaining surrealists were in the process of committing suicide gradually. [p. 339]

Just as Dalí's generation of artists struggled with the social and political issues that led to retreat and dispersal following World War I, Rothko's contemporaries did the same after World War II. Also, like some of Dalí's contemporaries, several of Rothko's fellow artists of the New York school of abstract expressionist art had

died under suicidal circumstances prior to Rothko's own decision to kill himself. Jackson Pollock, for example, died in a single-car accident while drunk.

DALÍ'S HOMAGE TO ROTHKO

Mark Rothko's suicide may hold the key to unlocking Dalí's homage to him in the painting *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean Sea Which at Twenty Meters Becomes the Portrait of Abraham Lincoln (Homage to Rothko)*, completed in 1974, four years after Rothko took sleep medication, slashed his forearms, and died in his New York studio (Breslin 1993).

The painting depicts Dalí's wife, Gala, shown nude from behind, gazing out of a window shaped like a cross and framed by square tiles in various colors, at a blazing sun and the blue of the Mediterranean Sea. The sun is a double image that also depicts the head of Jesus Christ on the cross as seen from above, taken from Dalí's earlier work, *Christ of St. John of the Cross* (1951). (A detail showing this double image in *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean* appears as Figure 2, p. 558.) Dalí experimented with a view of the crucifixion from above in another work as well: a 1950 drawing entitled *Christ en Perspective* (reproduced here as Figure 3, p. 559).

Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean also contains another, more surprising double image in that the tiles surrounding the window are pixels making up the image of Abraham Lincoln, based on a photograph taken by the photographer Mathew Brady and the image that appears on the American five-dollar bill. From a distance of about sixty feet from the original painting, or with some squinting on viewing a printed reproduction, the portrait of Lincoln can readily be seen (see Figure 1, p. 557).

The Dalinian theme portrayed in the painting is death through sacrificial martyrdom and rebirth through love. Here the link to Rothko seems to be that the artist dies as a martyr to his art, but is reborn through art's eternal beauty. The link between the elements of this painting and Rothko's suicide are not self-evident,

and will be explored in what follows through an integration of some of the psychological issues that were influential in Dalí's life and personality. My focus here is an analysis of the painting's two double images—Lincoln/Gala and Sun/Christ.

Dalí's Choice of Lincoln: Links to Rothko

The image of Abraham Lincoln embedded in the painting is based on a photo that Dalí first saw in the November 1973 issue of *Scientific American*, accompanying an article by Leon Harmon entitled "The Recognition of Faces." Harmon used his computer to calculate the minimum number of pixels—ultimately, 252—that it took to generate a "course-scale" image of a human face. Dalí obtained a copy of Harmon's photo, had it blown up to 14 x 12 feet, and overpainted the pixels, arriving at the first version of *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean*. (This version, completed in 1974, is now in the Teatre-Museum Dalí in Figueres, Spain.) In 1976, he reduced the scale and painted an oil on canvas of the same image, 99¼ x 75½ inches, which is now in the Salvador Dalí Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida.

The image of Lincoln in the painting has multiple significations. Hine and Kropf (2005) pointed out that Lincoln was assassinated during a civil war that may have reminded Dalí of the civil war in Spain. Lorca's death by firing squad in this war can be read as a parallel to Lincoln's fate. Moreover, the Dalinian theme of rebirth is represented by the fact that the American civil war preserved the Union; Lincoln is here immortalized as a savior (*salvador*) of the nation, just as artists are immortalized through their art. Dalí, however, seems to allude to the idea that great art and fame entail the danger of premature death and sacrificial martyrdom. This echoes a fear that Nagera (1967) speculated beset van Gogh in his artistic career: the equation of success with death. Dalí had something that van Gogh never achieved, however—the love of an idealized woman, which allowed him to avoid enactment of a fantasized fusion with the dead victim. In addition, Dalí's writings indicate that he believed his brother died in order to make way

for him and his immortal art. This would join these deaths with fantasies of sacrifice that others may live, themselves linked to Christ's sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

If Lincoln is linked to Rothko's suicide through Crevel's and Lorca's deaths, this may also have stirred Dalí's conflicts surrounding the death of his brother. A civil war can be characterized as a war between brothers. It is relevant that Rothko was born on September 25, 1903, and Dalí's brother died on August 1 of the same year; Dalí himself was born nine months later, on May 13, 1904. It is not unreasonable to believe that Dalí may have identified Rothko with his dead brother, as well as with himself, after reading obituaries mentioning Rothko's birth date. Dalí's identity was both fragile and fluid; he tended to merge his identity with others,' necessitating flamboyant statements of his difference in dress, appearance, philosophy, etc., as a kind of false self (Winnicott 1953). This false self may have served to defend against the dead-self identification with his victim-brother, to use Orgel's (1974a) terms.

I believe that Dalí displayed indications of fantasies of fusion with the victim in his autobiographical writings and in his artistic productions. The link between his friendship with Lorca and their mutual admiration for and identification with St. Sebastian, the martyr, is only one example. Dalí's compromise formations and their defensive components were such that they served to prevent him from experiencing the kind of suicidal intent that beset other artists of his acquaintance, including Rothko.

Thus, the following equation represents the steps leading up to Dalí's choice of Lincoln to pay homage to Rothko:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Lincoln} &= \text{Rothko} = \text{Crevel} = \text{St. Sebastian} = \text{Lorca} \\ &= \text{Christ} = \text{dead brother} = \text{martyred self} \end{aligned}$$

This equation represents the usefully fluid self-object boundaries of the creative artist. In more frankly disturbed individuals prone to fusion with the victim, these fluid boundaries may lead simply to pathological symptoms. All the figures mentioned refer to Dalí's feared doubles because they are associated with death,

FIGURE 1 ⁶

⁶ *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean Sea Which at Twenty Meters Becomes the Portrait of Abraham Lincoln—Homage to Rothko (Second Version)*, 1976, oil on canvas, 75.5 x 99.25 inches. This image is © Salvador Dalí, Fundación Gala-Salvador Dalí (Artists Rights Society), 2006, and the Collection of the Salvador Dalí Museum, Inc., St. Petersburg, FL, 2006.



FIGURE 2
(detail of Figure 1)

FIGURE 3 ⁷

⁷ *Christ en Perspective*, 1950, pencil drawing, 30 x 40 inches. This image is © Salvador Dalí, Fundación Gala-Salvador Dalí (Artists Rights Society), 2006, and the Collection of the Salvador Dalí Museum, Inc., St. Petersburg, FL, 2006.



FIGURE 4



FIGURE 5

(details of Figure 1)

self-annihilation, and/or homosexuality. Orgel (1974a, 1974b) made a relevant point about artists who suicide, and Sabbadini (1988) and Nagera (1967) made the same point in regard to replacement children: these individuals identify with both the victim and the perpetrator of what they regard as the murder of the lost object. That is, children feel themselves responsible for the early death of a parent or sibling, and also simultaneously blame the parent(s) for the killing, or at least for allowing it to happen.

If the child's own aggression is not adequately defended against, the child becomes both fearful of his/her own murderous aggression and may project it onto the parent(s) and fear that the parent(s) will murder him/her. In Dalí's case, he seems to have identified with both the assassin and the victim, although his identification with his brother in his analogy to two drops of water is the more prevalent one. He was able to project a good deal of his rage onto his father, whom he saw as tyrannical (apparently with some good reason).

The First Double Image: Gala and Lincoln

Seen from a distance, the nude portrait of Gala, standing in the cross-shaped window, turns into the portrait of Lincoln. This may indicate that Gala was Dalí's personal savior, just as Christ was his religious savior; he may have fused his self representation with both. We know from his own account that Gala transformed Dalí's life—she saved him from psychological decompensation and collapse, homosexual conflicts, isolation, and, I would speculate, from inner deadness in fusion with his dead brother. He may well have been on his way to suicide, like his friend Crevel and later Rothko, or "assassination" by tyrannical father figures for his beliefs, like Lincoln and Lorca, when he "miraculously" met Gala. His unconscious identification with his brother may have been transformed into love for Gala, and he became the resurrected, alive brother as long as he could identify with an image of Gala as the aggressive doer (Orgel 1974a; Segel 1969). She may also have become both his idealized, resurrected mother and his ideal, though feminine,

self. That Dalí came to equate Gala with the Madonna is seen concretely in *The Madonna of Port Lligat* (1950), among other similar paintings of which Gala was the subject.

The depiction of Gala as Madonna heralds the beginning of Dalí's "nuclear mysticism": the combination of his fascination with nuclear physics and his newfound faith in Roman Catholicism (Dalí 1951). Gala becomes the mother of Christ, as well as the resurrected, dead brother-self. In this respect, we could speculate that Dalí identified not with the victim, but with the doer (Segel 1969), and thus gained psychological strength by this fusion with a strong, idealized object (the steel of his personality). As we have seen, this strength waned when Gala died.

Using Gala and Lincoln as a double image continues a Dalinian fascination with the relativity of perception, as well as his interest in moving pictures and in half-tone photography, the use of dots of various sizes and shapes to create pictures in newspapers. He employed an artistic method based on this photographic technique in his *Sistine Madonna* (1958), as well as in *Portrait of My Dead Brother* (1963). Dalí related these perceptual issues to his interest in matter and its atomic structure. He brought to his paintings elements of both the superimposition of multiple images, and of montage, where one image leads immediately to the next.

In *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean*, Dalí painted in one tile a small version of the Harmon photo of Lincoln, and in another tile a small image of the nude Gala who is depicted in the main painting, constituting a painting-within-a-painting (Balter 2006). (See Figures 4 and 5, p. 560.) A hallmark of Dalí's "paranoiac-critical" philosophy was that perception depends on the psychology and the point of view of the viewer. He used the double image in many of his works, including *Slave Market with the Disappearing Bust of Voltaire* (1940), *Old Age, Adolescence and Infancy (The Three Ages)* (1940), and *The Hallucinogenic Toreador* (1969-1970), to name only a few.

I propose that the double image of Lincoln/Gala in *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean* can be linked to Dalí's conflicts around being a replacement child. The double image in this paint-

ing reflects Dalí's preoccupation, shared with other replacement children, with various depersonalized states, particularly the idea of the double. Sabbadini (1988) linked this interest in the double to the role of the dead sibling as the guest/ghost who continually inhabits the surviving child's life. Dalí was able to deal with this preoccupation by creating works of art.

Another way in which this double image functions is by reflecting the fusion of both self and object boundaries, and also representations of the relation between the dead-murdered-guilty self (itself a fusion of the victim and perpetrator) and the idealized immortal self. Dalí may have been expressing the idea that, through the love of Gala and the Roman Catholic religion, he could be resurrected like Christ, immortalized, and would never die. In this case, the transformation of Gala into Lincoln, or the reverse, may represent the artist's invitation to the viewer to experience some of the fluidity of self and object representation that he himself experienced.

The Second Double Image: The Sun and Jesus Christ

The second double image in this painting—the sun and the head of the crucified Christ seen from above (see Figure 2, p. 558)—is linked to the first. The sun may have represented for Dalí the nuclear reaction (or, in this case, the fusion!) of his nuclear mysticism. He was extremely disturbed by the violence of World War II, particularly the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in 1945 (Gibson 1997). The sun may represent, on the one hand, life and the resurrection of the day, and, on the other, the violent, destructive forces of nuclear fusion. The sun's continual renewal through nuclear reactions may have represented for Dalí the combination of life-giving and life-taking, evidenced in the seemingly immortal omnipotence of his early parenting objects. These destructive forces are fused pictorially with another opposite—the martyrdom and resurrection of Christ.

As mentioned previously, crucifixion scenes interested the artist in earlier works (an example is depicted in Figure 3, p. 559).

In *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean*, the theme of martyrdom is repeated with Christ in the same way that the theme of the potential for destructiveness and death is repeated. Dalí is identifying with the crucified as well as the resurrected Christ, and seemingly associating Gala with both his Madonna and his savior. It is relevant here that Dalí recalls that pictures of both his dead brother and Christ were prominent in his parents' bedroom when he was a child (Dalí and Parinaud 1973).⁵ The theme of sacrifice is salient here, as Dalí, like many replacement children, seems to have felt that his brother died in order that he might live. His fame therefore immortalizes not only the artist himself, but also his mother and his brother.

This image further reflects that Dalí saw himself as the savior of modern art, as well as modern civilization, through his artistic portrayal of a combination of nuclear physics and Catholicism, a new scientific religion (Dalí 1951). Dalí held this belief during both his paranoid-critical period and his nuclear mystical period. It may have been through this omnipotent fantasy (Novick and Novick 1996) that he was able to avoid a full-fledged fusion with the dead victim, which would have led him to depression and death. He accomplished this by attaching himself to Gala, whom he saw as another representation of the idealized, omnipotent, life-giving mother—a form of identification with the doer. This may have saved him from decompensation—until the doer died.

CONCLUSION

The psychological considerations offered in this paper about *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean* add to and complement the artistic affinities—such as Dalí's inclusion of the Spanish tiles, and his respect for the American artists he met in New York—which form the basis of art historical understandings of the painting. Dalí's writings and life history offer a fascinating opportunity for a psy-

⁵ Edelheit (1974) postulated a link between primal-scene schema and crucifixion fantasies. This link seems quite apt in Dalí's case.

chological analysis. This is in part because there are always questions about what was unconscious in his art and/or his life.

In fact, this is the gist of a comment that Freud made to Dalí at their meeting in 1938, when Dalí showed Freud his painting *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (1937) (Brok 2006; Romm and Slap 1983). Freud remarked that he usually looked for the unconscious in works of art, but in Dalí's painting, the unconscious seemed to be manifest. There is no doubt that Dalí had access to much that is usually not in our awareness. Indeed, Dalí himself described the replacement-child syndrome before Cain and Cain (1964) were able to do so on the basis of their clinical interviews. He was well aware of the varied roles that Gala played in his emotional life and the various self and object representations she offered him. Nonetheless, it is doubtful that *Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean* was created with the psychological issues I have described consciously in mind.

In any case, these psychological observations neither diminish the artist's creative achievements, nor reduce either the art or the artist to his internal struggles alone. The psychoanalyst may react with awe in appreciating the ways in which this artist portrayed his inner struggles in such beautiful and creative ways, as he searched for psychological stability and artistic immortality. Dalí's artistic genius lay in his ability to transform his personal conflicts and torments into works of art and literature that touch, fascinate, and compel us in many different ways, according to our own sensibilities and subjectivity.

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SUBLIMATION AND *DAS DING* IN MAHLER'S SYMPHONY NO. 8

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This paper addresses sublimation in Gustav Mahler's Symphony no. 8 through Lacan's (1986, 1992) notion of das Ding, the Thing. The author reads Lacan as using das Ding, a term taken from Freud, as shorthand for archaic experience. Lacan provides a reference point when he states that "the Kleinian doctrine places the mother's body there" (1992, p. 117). Das Ding refers to unmediated contact with the Other, usually mother, in which traces of a primitive gratification mark the loss of immediacy, point to a lost object, and establish the trajectory of desire. Sublimation is an attempt to bring us into contact with das Ding.

When Gustav Mahler arrived at his summer retreat in June 1906, he was, as usual, filled with doubt about whether he would be able to compose. He reports, however, being immediately "seized by the Spiritus creator," which "shook and lashed" him as he felt the music being "dictated" to him (de LaGrange 1999, p. 889; see also Mahler 2004, pp. 234, 357). Earlier that year, he had said of his difficulties: "There was the Court, there was the press, there was the audience, there was my family, and finally the enemy in my own breast Often, it was terrible!" (de LaGrange, p. 394).

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After he had finished the symphony in August 1906, Mahler wrote:

I have finished my Eighth Symphony. It is the grandest thing I have done yet, and so peculiar in content and form that it is really impossible to write anything about it. Try to imagine the whole universe beginning to ring and resound. These are no longer human voices, but planets and suns revolving It is a gift to the nation. All my previous symphonies are just preludes to this. In the other works everything is still subjective-tragic—this one is a great joy-bringer. [de LaGrange 1999, p. 926]

We can see in this creative transformation the work of sublimation.

MAHLER'S EIGHTH SYMPHONY

The Eighth Symphony is the first symphony written primarily for the voice as an instrument; it uses two texts that direct the reader to an Other not given within the ordinary empirical bounds of human knowledge. The first text, the ninth-century Latin hymn, "Veni Creator Spiritus," is a plea for grace; the second text, the end of Part Two of Goethe's *Faust* (1832), celebrates the redemption of Faust, as well as of his lover Gretchen and three penitential women (Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman in the Gospel of John, and Mary of Egypt). Both texts affirm the fragility of human beings and our inability to save ourselves by ourselves.

Mahler uses these texts not only to point to a dimension we long for beyond our human reach, but he also performs the inadequacy of human language to bring us there by enveloping us with the human voice in sonority rather than in signification. He uses the texts first to create a verbal signifying direction, then an edge-of-signification threshold limit marked by complex contrapuntal polyphonies in which the words become dense, and then sheer sonorous resonance. This sequence is repeated over and over.

SUBLIMATION IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

In surveying psychoanalytic theories of sublimation, I have suggested that a wide range of psychological functioning is engaged in the act of creating through a sensible medium, as well as in the effects produced by the object created (Muller 1999). These modes of engagement reach across a broad range of mental states; I describe five types of sublimation, each related to a particular psychological organization, along the lines of the hierarchical model proposed by Gedo and Goldberg (1973). I have labeled these *presubjective*, *subjective*, *dyadic*, *triadic*, and *postsubjective*.

The Five Types of Sublimation

Presubjective dissolution of boundaries in very disturbed patients requires some materiality as a medium to set markers in an otherwise dedifferentiated, nameless psychotic terrain. Since language no longer provides an anchoring and containing function for them, such patients carve on their flesh, paint with their blood, and find other ways to use substitute objects: a patient who was suicidal one night stretched out his bed sheet on the floor and painted on it, and the next morning told me: "I hanged the picture instead of myself." The premier statement of this condition is carved on a wooden sign that hangs over the entrance to the shop-studio at the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts: "No one has ever written, painted, sculpted, modeled, built, or invented except literally to get out of hell—Antonin Artaud."

Subjective focus on maintaining a sense of cohesion often takes the form of using others to regulate one's equilibrium. Here created works can serve as self-objects (Kohut 1976) or as opportunities to repair internal objects damaged by one's felt aggression (Klein 1929).

Dyadic relations with created objects often mirror or replace interpersonal relationships; for example, Modell (1970) states that the "psychology of creativity" can be "modeled on the psychology

of object relations" (p. 244). In this kind of engagement with the created object, sublimation can assist with the work of mourning.

Triadic psychological structures (id-ego-superego, drive-object-aim, self-other-ideals) form the basis of Freud's (1914) view of sublimation, as when he wrote: "Sublimation is a process that concerns object-libido and consists in the instinct's directing itself towards an aim other than, and remote from, that of sexual satisfaction" (p. 94). In this mode of sublimation, drive gratification is achieved because repression is bypassed.

Postsubjective engagement in sublimation goes beyond an ego-centric attempt toward self-expression, drive gratification, or use of others to mirror oneself; it grants the personal limitations of one's mortality and attempts a transformation of one's narcissism into an affirmation that transcends one's own life. This function of sublimation is directly at odds with a common contemporary summation exemplified by the following: "The forms and structures of music embody the experience of human subjectivity, and the analysis of music must focus on its function in the actualization, elaboration, and enhancement of self-experience" (Hagman 2005, p. 98). The contributions of Lacan (1992) are useful in thinking about sublimation at the postsubjective level of engagement, and it is at this level of engagement—and not in taking the music as a form of self-expression—that I will consider Mahler's Eighth Symphony.

The Relevance of Lacanian Theory

Lacan emphasizes the structuring effects of language on experience—on what he calls the three registers of experience (Felman 1987; Muller and Richardson 1982). The *Symbolic* register organizes experience through any sort of articulation, so that, through systems of signs presented in language, ritual, institutions, and all forms of culture, we are suffused with models that map our lives. The *Imaginary* register consists of all the ways we are captivated by the sensuous aspects of objects, the imagery that fascinates and incites desire, the image we try to present of ourselves, the mirroring reflections that promote the ego's prestige. The register of the

Real is what is left over—for what we call *reality* is a collage of the Symbolic and the Imaginary, while the Real is what lies beyond the epistemological frontier of names and images. The Real is undifferentiated, without gaps, associated with the dissolution of boundaries and the loss of distinction between subject and object.

Sublimation approaches the Real, the nameless, through the presentation of what Lacan calls *das Ding*, “the Thing.” The notion of “the thing” has a long history in philosophy. Plato asked what the relation is between the thing itself (*to pragma auto*) and the thing’s name or its sign, a relation that the Stoics later distinguished into three terms: the signifier, the signified (the thing), and the signification (see Agamben 1984). The notion of “the thing in itself” (*das Ding an sich*) is most commonly understood as that which, for Kant, is unknowable, as distinguished from the object as it appears to us with our a priori structures of perception and understanding (Kant 1781). Heidegger reviews this in his essay on “The Thing” (1950), which Lacan cites (1992, p. 120). Heidegger reflects on a jug as “a thing,” and writes that what enables the jug to be a holding vessel is its emptiness:

The emptiness, the void, is what does the vessel’s holding. The empty space, this nothing of the jug, is what the jug is as the holding vessel The vessel’s thingness does not lie at all in the material of which it consists, but in the void that holds. [1950, p. 169]

Heidegger (1950) criticizes previous reflections on the thing on the grounds that they presume, as if given, a knowing subject set off against the thing as an object to be represented; but, he states, “no representation of what is present, in the sense of what stands forth and of what stands over against as an object, ever reaches to the thing *qua* thing” (pp. 168-169). In the subject-object terms of representational thinking, “the thingness of the thing remains concealed, forgotten” (p. 170). Lacan transposes this problematic of emptiness onto the field of desire, where the thing as void and its unrepresentability are decisive for his view of sublimation.

For Lacan, sublimation does not provide a substitute object, a replacement for some lost object, but rather brings us contact with a nameless non-object. To borrow Freud's metaphor for his intervention with Mahler when they met for a four-hour session in 1910: "[Sublimation is] as if you would dig a single shaft through a mysterious building" (Mahler quoted in Feder 2004, p. 233; see also Jones [1955], and Mitchell [1958]). Thus, sublimation sends a beam of light down into ourselves, exposing the structure of our desire in relation to the nameless. It is this nameless non-object that is addressed by Lacan, following Freud, as "the lost object" or *das Ding*, "the thing"—that which is least individuated and determined, and yet can still be spoken of in some way (Muller 1987).

In attempting to describe the earliest relational matrix between an infant and his or her caretaker from which an iconic form of understanding develops, Freud (1895) writes:

Thus the complex of a fellow-creature falls into two portions. One of these gives the impression of being a constant structure and remains as a self-contained *thing*; while the other can be *understood* by the activity of memory—that is, can be traced back to information from the subject's own body. [pp. 393-394, translation modified, italics in original]

This "cognized" aspect of the mother is graspable through an iconic identification, a mirroring experience, a likeness of perceived bodily signs, whereas the other "portion" remains "as a self-contained *thing*" ("*als Ding beisammenbleibt*," Freud 1950, p. 416, italics in original). It cannot be understood, cannot be mirrored, is without likeness, and remains unknowable—"an unassimilable portion (the thing)," writes Freud (1895, p. 423) ("*einen unassimilierbaren Teil [das Ding]*," 1950, p. 445). This unassimilable, unknowable, nameless "portion" of the mother becomes the basis for the lost object of desire.

In his later essay on negation, Freud (1925) emphasizes that *das Ding* refers to presubjective aspects of experience in which primitive attributions of "good" or "bad" are narcissistically made, based

on whether something is assimilated or spit out, and that this inchoative state precedes the subject-object distinction: "The antithesis between subjective and objective does not exist from the first," he writes (p. 237). Once the subject-object distinction is constituted, however, the unassimilated "portion" of experience is lost to understanding. This creates a void, a gap, in the experience of the objective; something remains opaque, strange, and unassimilable—in the other, as well as on the side of the subject, since a "portion" of the subject's own presubjective experience is lost to understanding once the subject-object distinction takes hold. This loss is the foundation of human desire and of all forms of human inquiry.

Hence Freud can state that the "first and immediate aim, therefore, of reality-testing" is not to *find* an object, but to "refind" it (1925, p. 237), because "a precondition for the setting up of reality-testing is that objects shall have been lost which once brought real satisfaction" (p. 238). The setting up ("*die Einsetzung*," Freud 1948, p. 14) of reality testing—not necessarily its further development and operations—is motivated by the search for the lost and impossible object of desire, that which was "unassimilable" in the other and likewise unnameable in experience.

What makes this "object" lost and impossible? I take Freud's description of the transition from presubjective experience to the establishment of the "antithesis" between subject and object as referring to what Winnicott called "the place where it can be said that *continuity* is giving place to *contiguity*" (1967, p. 101, italics in original)—that is, where continuity gives way to separation, to the splitting effects of the intervention of language and signifying convention:

What is lost in this transition from immediacy to mediated relations is maternal sonority as such, which is now necessarily taken as a *sign* of presence; what originally was sheer sonorous resonance is now quickly overshadowed by words expressed in a given tone of voice. The same shift affects mother's smell, touch, rhythm, color, taste, each of which, once they become signs of presence and of desire,

lose their former immediacy and now become idiosyncratic traces of the lost object, that portion of the mother that remains unassimilable and *als Ding beisammenbleibt*—remains as a self-contained thing. [Muller 1999, p. 118, italics in original]

This is what I think Freud conveys when he writes to Fliess of “the prehistoric, unforgettable other”: “Attacks of dizziness and fits of weeping—all these are aimed at *the Other*—but mostly at the prehistoric, unforgettable other who is never equaled by anyone later” (Masson 1985, p. 213, italics in original); “*Der Schwindelanfall, Weinkrampf, alles ist auf den Anderen berechnet, meist aber auf jenen prähistorischen unvergesslichen Anderen, den kein späterer mehr erreicht*” (Freud 1950, p. 192).

Lacan (1992) addresses this primordial field of the unforgettable lost object through the experience of what he calls “that excluded interior” (p. 101), referring to it as “the emptiness at the center of the real that is called the Thing” (p. 121). He gives a new name to what is lost in the subject as well as in the object (lost because of the subject-object opposition and the mediating intervention of signifying convention), referring to what is lost as “the central place, as the intimate exteriority or ‘extimacy’ that is the Thing” (1992, p. 139) (“*cette extimité, qui est la Chose*,” 1986, p. 167).

Lacan here separates himself from those, like Loewald (1988), for whom sublimation “is a kind of reconciliation of the subject-object dichotomy” (p. 20), for, according to Loewald, it is “the original unity that is in the process of being restored, or something of it saved, in sublimation” (p. 13). Loewald, who also read Heidegger (see Loewald 1978, p. 19), provides a useful contrast to Lacan because he, too, is working at the edge of the emergence of the subject-object differentiation. Referring to the unity that is on its way to being restored in sublimation, Loewald (1988) writes:

The unitary experience of which I spoke has been described—speaking in terms of individual development—as the undifferentiated phase of psychic development . . . I emphasize that in this first phase, there is likewise no dif-

ferentiation of subject and object, of a self and an object world. [p. 14]

In writing of the “original unity” that sublimation aims toward, Loewald (1988) emphasizes the reconnection of formerly undifferentiated elements of experience:

In such a view, the transmutations of sublimation reveal an unfolding into differentiated elements of a oneness of instinctual-spiritual experience: oneness stays alive as connection. Sublimations are progressing differentiations that culminate in new synthetic organizations of such unitary experiences. [p. 13]

Referring to “the mother–infant matrix of psychic life,” Loewald (1988) writes: “Sublimation, in this view, involves an internal re-creative return toward that matrix, a reconciliation of the polarized elements produced by individuation and, one may suspect, by sexual differentiation. Sublimation thus brings together what had become separate” (pp. 21-22). Sublimation “culminates in celebration . . . an affirmation of unity” (p. 22). Again:

In referring to more advanced forms of sublimation, I have called this kind of union a reconciliation of polarities, of separateness In genuine sublimation this alienating differentiation is being reversed in such a way that a fresh unity is created by an act of uniting. In this reversal—a restoration of unity—there comes into being a *differentiated unity* (a manifold) that captures separateness in the act of uniting, and unity in the act of separating. [Loewald 1988, pp. 23-24, italics in original]

He ends his inquiry with a question: “Could sublimation be both a mourning of lost original oneness and a celebration of oneness regained?” (1988, p. 81).

Not for Lacan, for whom sublimation does not restore such unity, but rather brings us to the edge of a nameless void, for he writes that “in every form of sublimation, emptiness is determinative” (1992, p. 130). He gives examples of prehistoric cave paintings

lining the inside of a void, frescoes on the walls of the cavernous spaces of temples and churches, and the potter's jug that can be receptively empty only because it encloses a void. He repeats that "All art is characterized by a certain mode of organization around this emptiness" (1992, p. 130). Thus, for Lacan, there is no adequate object of desire, no possibility of becoming "whole," since our origin as human subjects is founded on a lack, a gap, a "something missing" that we can never replace.

In keeping with Freud, Lacan (1992) stresses that, in the primordial field preceding the subject-object distinction, *das Ding* "was there from the beginning, that it was the first thing that separated itself from everything the subject began to name and articulate" (p. 83). It is "the first outside" and "is to be found at the most as something missed. One doesn't find it, but only its pleasurable associations" (p. 52). The place of *das Ding* is related to the place of the mother at the earliest edge of signification:

I mean that the whole development at the level of the mother/child interpsychology—and that is badly expressed in the so-called categories of frustration, satisfaction, and dependence—is nothing more than an immense development of the essential character of the maternal thing [*de la chose maternelle*, 1986, p. 82], of the mother, insofar as she occupies the place of that thing, of *das Ding*. [Lacan 1992, p. 67]

Why, then, is *das Ding* said to be the void at the center of the subject?

The reason is that *das Ding* is at the center only in the sense that it is excluded. That is to say, in reality *das Ding* has to be posited as exterior, as the prehistoric Other that it is impossible to forget—the Other whose primacy of position Freud affirms in the form of something *entfremdet*, something strange to me, although it is at the heart of me, something that on the level of the unconscious only a representation can represent. [1992, p. 71]

In sublimation, this representation has a specific function. Lacan, in giving "the most general formula" of sublimation, states that "it raises an object . . . to the dignity of the Thing" (1992, p. 112)

("elle élève un objet . . . à la dignité de la Chose," 1986, p. 133). He then gives the example of Jacques Prévert's linking together in a wall hanging hundreds of empty matchboxes, each of them enclosing the void, showing "the Thing that subsists in a matchbox," as an example of raising an object to the dignity of *das Ding*. In sublimation, therefore, we are given "the revelation of the Thing beyond the object" (1992, p. 114).

In summary, in this postsubjective mode of engagement, sublimation does not present the desiring subject with an object of desire or need, but rather engages the very structure of desire itself by addressing desire's void through the revelation of *das Ding* beyond the art object, present in its absence through our own longing, expectation, hope, illusion, exquisite sadness, and ecstatic resonance.

SUBLIMATION AND *DAS DING* IN SYMPHONY NO. 8

We now turn to Mahler's symphony to examine what it holds regarding sublimation and Lacan's notion of *das Ding*. Where do we see *das Ding* in Mahler's Symphony no. 8? Mahler's words quoted earlier bring together a number of Lacanian themes regarding sublimation. Mahler states that his symphony is "so peculiar in content and form that it is really impossible to write anything about it" (de LaGrange 1999, p. 926), indicating that he was at a loss for words to describe what he had done, and suggesting that in transcending the conventional signifying framework of the symphony, he has broached the nameless, the unwrite-able. When he asks the reader to try "to imagine the whole universe beginning to ring and resound," he takes us to the limit of ordinary signs and invokes the possibility of sheer sonority, prior to the subject-object distinction of our familiar framework in which signs stand for objects in some respect. The usual dimension of vocal signification has been altered: "These are no longer human voices, but planets and suns revolving." The human voice has here become transpersonal, evocative rather than denotative, located at the edge of signifying capac-

ity, especially in passages of complex polyphony as well as in high-pitched, extended, open-voweled solos. The voice here, as Mahler stated, is “the most beautiful instrument of all” (de LaGrange 1999, p. 933). The figure of “planets and suns revolving” articulates the symphony’s structure and resonance with that of a cosmic scale of light and movement.

As noted, Mahler contrasts this symphony to all his previous ones: in them, “everything is still subjective-tragic,” whereas the Symphony no. 8 “is a great joy-bringer” (de LaGrande 1999, p. 926). I read this to suggest that in the previous symphonies, an element of self-expression, of mirroring of subjective states, has a dominant role, whereas in the present one, a greater degree of transcendence of the purely personal has been achieved. As Stuart Feder (2004) writes in his psychobiography of Mahler:

Autobiographical sources were symbolized in Mahler’s music rather than blatantly represented in some literal fashion. Mahler was in this sense a master of sublimation, as deeply personal sources of musical content were divested of the particular and rendered universal. [p. 119]

Rather than conveying subjective aspects of gaining or losing an object of desire, this symphony seems to open up the structure of desire itself as an arc governed by an impossible longing, a longing whose nameless object sustains the very desire destined never to reach its human realization.

As mentioned, Mahler’s Eighth Symphony has two parts: the first consists of a polyphonic elaboration of the Latin hymn, “Veni Creator Spiritus”; the second part sets to music the ending of Goethe’s *Faust*, Part Two (1832), completed the year that Goethe died at age eighty-two. The two texts span a thousand years of European history and draw on the two languages that shaped the course of most European languages and culture. The Latin hymn had been translated by Goethe in 1820 (de LaGrange 1999, p. 892); “Mahler never ceased to read Goethe and was steeped in his thinking” (p. 929).

Goethe's *Faust*, Part Two, was completed more than two decades after Part One, and caused some controversy when it appeared. At the end of Part One, we expect Faust's soul will be claimed by Mephistopheles as integral to their bargain and to the tragedy of Faust's abandoned lover, Gretchen, who has murdered their child in a moment of madness. In Part Two, however, Faust is redeemed, and the tragic dimension of the work is undone (in a most unsatisfactory way, according to Kierkegaard [1841]). After Faust is redeemed, along with Gretchen, Goethe's (1832) text ends with a paean to "*das Ewig-Weibliche*," "the Eternal-Womanly"; and so we might ask, how do we get from the Creator Spiritus to *das Ewig-Weibliche*?

SYMPHONY NO. 8, PART ONE: "VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS"

Lacan follows Freud in identifying the three fields of sublimation as science, religion, and art. Each takes its own position toward *das Ding*. Lacan states that science forecloses *das Ding* through a kind of negative hallucination or unbelief, operating as if it did not exist and did not function as the cause of desire. This allows it to ground its claim to pretended objectivity. Religion circles around *das Ding* in a kind of respectful displacement. Art represses *das Ding* by covering its place with a representation.

Mahler chose as his first text in the Eighth Symphony a venerable Latin hymn, "Veni Creator Spiritus," and we can attempt to see how it circles around *das Ding*. The hymn probably dates from the ninth century. Some scholars make a case for its being composed by Rabanus Maurus, abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Fulda and a student of Alcuin; Maurus later became the Archbishop of Mainz and died in A.D. 856. In its oldest accepted version, dating from tenth-century manuscripts (Wilmart 1932), the hymn has six four-line stanzas with eight syllables per line.

The hymn begins with the second-person singular, imperative form of the verb "to come," *Veni*, here more a petition or invitation

than an imperative, addressed to the Spirit as Creator, and is a request for the visitation of grace. The first three stanzas offer descriptive terms for the Spirit being addressed—that is, the second person, the *you* of the imperative *Veni*—while the second three stanzas state in what forms grace is being requested.

Here is the standard Latin version of the text, which “is clearly the one Mahler had before him during his first week” at his summer retreat in June of 1906 (de LaGrange 1999, p. 894n):¹

Veni creator spiritus, Come creator spirit,
Mentes tuorum visita, Visit your minds,
Imple superna gratia, Fill with grace from above
Quae tu creasti pectora. The hearts you created.

Qui paraclitus diceris, You who are called consoler,
Donum Dei altissimi, Gift of God most high/deep,
Fons vivus, ignis, caritas, Living spring, fire, love,
Et spiritalis unctio. And spiritual balm.

Tu septiformis munere, You seven-formed in gift,
Dextrae Dei tu digitus, You finger of God’s right hand,
Tu rite promissum patris, You of old promised by the Father
Sermone ditans guttura. Enriching throats with speech.

Accende lumen sensibus, Inflamm with light the senses,
Infunde amorem cordibus, Pour love into hearts,
Infirma nostri corporis The infirmities of our body
Virtute firmans perpeti. Fortify with lasting strength.

Hostem repellas longius Drive the enemy far away
Pacemque dones protinus, And grant continuous peace,
Ductore sic te praevio With you so leading the way
Vitemus omne noxium. May we avoid all harm.

Per te sciamus, da, patrem Through you may we know the Father
Noscamus atque filium, And have familiarity with the Son,

¹ The Latin version quoted here is contained in Wilmar (1932, pp. 41, 44) and in de LaGrange (1999, p. 894). All English translations of the Latin text in this article are mine.

Te utriusque spiritum And you the spirit of each
Credamus omni tempore. May we believe in all seasons.

The following two stanzas, included by Mahler, are considered later additions to the hymn:

Da gaudiorum praemia, Grant the rewards of joy,
Da gratiarum munera, Give the favors of graces,
Dissolve litis vincula, Break the chains of wrangling,
Adstringe pacis foedera. Make fast the ties of peace.

Gloria Patri Domino Glory to the Lord Father
Natoque, qui a mortuis And to the Son, who from the dead
[Deo sit Gloria, Glory be to God
Et filio qui a mortuis And to the Son who from the dead]
Surrexit, ac Paraclito, Rose, and to the Paraclete,
In saeculorum saecula. Unto generations of generations.

The bracketed words in the last stanza, which is another, later doxology, were added by Mahler; the seventh stanza (with its rhyme scheme AAAA), although included in some older German manuscripts, was clearly written by another hand aiming at greater polish, in marked contrast to the direct simplicity of the accepted, six-stanza version (see Wilmart 1932, p. 41n). It was apparently this seventh stanza that was missing to Mahler as he was composing and observing the rigor of the sonata form of Part One of his Eighth Symphony (de LaGrange 1999, p. 893). When the text later arrived by telegram, Mahler was astonished at the perfect fit with the music:

He felt so elated, so moved about this that he told the story . . . and spoke of his “ecstatic joy” at the “miracle,” the “mystery” which made the “words of the text coincide exactly with the bars already composed, and with the spirit and content of the composition.” [de LaGrange 1999, p. 428]

The hymn’s stated attributes of the *you* being addressed—with *you* being repeated in the Latin second-person singular *tu*, like the

use of *du* in German, the intimate form of religious address—include the following:

Creator of minds and hearts
 Source of grace
 Called Paracritus (advocate, counselor)
 Gift of God most deep/high
 Living Source
 Fire
 Love
 Spiritual balm
 Seven-formed gift
 Promised by the Father
 Enriching throats with speech
 Finger of God's right hand (as presented later, for example, in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling depicting the creation of Adam)

These attributes are various attempts to give names to what is experienced as the nameless and wholly gratuitous source of life, grace, love, consolation, and speech. This source from the start is named as "Creator" of both our minds (*mentes*) and our bodies (*pectora*, breasts), and whose presence is requested through "grace" that comes from beyond (*superna*) as a gift of God, who is beyond (*altissimi*, "most high," as in the heavens, or "most deep," as in an abyss). We do not presume to know the Creator Spiritus as most beyond, but we can refer to "you who are called Paracritus," called or spoken of as the advocate, consoler or counselor, somehow held in speech by language's ability to allude to and address what is not immediately given in experience as present.

Yet this power of speech, that which makes us most human in our ability to address the other, itself derives from the Spirit who "enriches our throats with speech," transforming what is merely guttural into the very hymn we are now speaking. The living source, the warmth and light of fire, love, and the skin-to-skin contact of "unction" (*unctio* means a rubdown with oil): these suggest a maternal nourishing, including the transmission of the "mother tongue."

The concrete imagery is warranted by our acknowledgment that, in both body and mind, we are created and remain dependent.

The term *septiformis*, “seven-formed,” refers to the traditional seven gifts of the Spirit, as initially formulated in the text of the prophet Isaiah 11:1-2:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse
and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of
Yahweh shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and piety,
and he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the
Lord.

The Hebrew word for spirit here is *ruah*, a word that appears more than 350 times in the Hebrew Bible. One commentator writes:

It is used in the first place to denote wind or a breath of air. Secondly, it is used for the force that vivifies the human being—the principle of life or breath and the seat of knowledge and feeling. Finally, it indicates the life of God himself, the force by which he acts and causes action, both at the physical and at the “spiritual” level. [Congar 1997, p. 3]

But the meaning of *spiritual* is, at best, ambiguous:

What do we mean when we speak of “spirit” and say that “God is spirit”? Are we speaking Greek or Hebrew? If we are speaking Greek, we are saying that God is immaterial. If we are speaking Hebrew, we are saying that God is a storm and an irresistible force. This is why, when we speak of spirituality, a great deal is ambiguous. Does spirituality mean becoming immaterial or does it mean being animated by the Holy Spirit? [Danielou 1971, quoted in Congar 1997, p. 4]

The Greek version risks abstraction of what in the Hebrew is experienced as more startling, more numinous, with the features

that Rudolf Otto (1926) named *tremendum* and *fascinosum* (the fearfully awesome and the gripping)—features that are associated with the “Wholly Other.”

In Part One of his Eighth Symphony, Mahler makes modifications to the Latin text:

1. He emphasizes our body’s infirmities, naming them first in stanza four and moving that stanza to become the third one, ahead of its usual position. The body’s infirmities and the request for lasting strength constitute one of the major musical themes of the symphony.
2. He substitutes the word *pessimum*, “most distressing,” for *noxium*, “harm,” although some of the older manuscripts have this word. We can speculate about the possible resonance with the German word *Pessimismus* and the affects associated with it.
3. He omits the attributes “promised by the Father” and “enriching throats with speech” in stanza three. The promise of the Spirit in the Bible (e.g., Joel 2:28-29, repeated in Acts 2:17) may have had complicated associations for Mahler, a Jew who became a Catholic convert as required by his appointment as director of the Vienna Court Opera. This complexity was evident when Mahler “admitted that the Eighth was perhaps the Mass he would never be able to bring himself to write because he couldn’t compose music to the Credo” (de LaGrange 1999, p. 929).
4. The attribute of the Spirit “enriching throats with speech” is omitted by Mahler perhaps because signifying speech is subordinated in the symphony to sonorous vocalization. The sonority which so characterizes Mahler’s music disturbed many critics who attended the performances of his works (Painter 1995); there is a four-thousand-year tradition of warnings against the seductiveness of the singing human voice when it is dis-

joined from words (Dolar 1996). Mahler's "original and wholly modern use of solo voices and chorus, with an unsurpassable mastery of sonority, colour, timbre, and acoustics, has not yet inspired a detailed study, but it merits one" (de LaGrange 1999, pp. 932-933).

The tone and rhythm of the opening music, in which "Veni" is sung to the Spirit, are consistent with joyful, even ecstatic expectation, but the music is nevertheless an invitation for contact and an appeal for grace that reaches beyond our power to achieve by ourselves. The Creator Spirit is asked to come with grace into our minds and hearts because we are frail mortals who do not see, do not love, and will die of bodily infirmities or be killed by the enemy.

Following the opening of "Veni," the main themes, organized by the musical frame, and in particular the vocal solos, include the following:

1. *Imple superna gratia*: "Fill with grace from above." This is the first vocal solo passage of the symphony; the subsequent polyphonic repetition of *gratia* washes over us like rain—generous, gratuitous, life-giving, reminiscent of the credo in Bach's B Minor Mass, when the chorus repeats *in remissionem*, "for the remission of sins." This theme of grace is echoed in the symphony's second movement by the repetition of the musical theme when Gretchen refers to Faust's spirit by saying: "*Er ahnet kaum das frische Leben*" ("He barely senses the new life"), and also by the invocation of the gracious *Mater Gloriosa* and the *Ewig-Weibliche*, which draws us onward.
2. *Infirma nostri corporis*: "The infirmities of our body." This musical section is one of the few passages when the symphony's tone spirals downward to become dark and foreboding, counterpoised by a contrasting violin solo, as fragile as an individual life.

Mahler had a near-death experience with internal bleeding in 1901 (Feder 2004). Following this medical crisis, he told Bruno Walter: "I possessed certainty, but

I have lost it; and tomorrow I will possess it and lose it the day after" (quoted in de LaGrange 1999, p. 462). In 1907, one year following his composition of the Eighth Symphony, while Mahler was again at his summer retreat, his older daughter, age five, died of diphtheria; he was then told that he himself had a grave heart condition. Three months before the symphony's first performance in 1910, he learned that his wife, Alma, was having an affair. And within a year, Mahler was dead.

Our fragility and ineluctable mortality are the clearest signs of our human inadequacy, and establish our existence as always at the edge of the nameless abyss. In the first movement of the Eighth Symphony, when the chorus asks the Spirit to drive the enemy far away, we hear a dissonant shriek and an impassioned plea for peace. In the second movement, the *Infirma* musical theme is repeated in conjunction with the Angels' reference to *ein Erdenrest*, an earthly residue, painful to bear, which clings to Faust's spirit.

3. *Accende lumen sensibus*: "Inflame the senses with light." The tenor's yearning for *lumen*, *lumen* movingly underscores how insufficient we are and how dependent we are on grace. Mahler stages his only march of the symphony after this moving plea for light, as if to ironize, by repeating *sensibus*, how ready we humans are to aggrandize our senses and be proud of them. This is referenced in the second movement by the plea "*O Gott! . . . Erleuchte mein bedürftig Herz!*" ("O God! Light up my insufficient heart!"), just before the redemption of Faust is announced.

The links between the first and second movements of the symphony are vastly more complex than this. A commentator (no less a figure than Arnold Schoenberg) wrote:

When one tries to grasp that these two sections of the Eighth Symphony are nothing other than one single extraordinary-

ily long and broad idea, a single idea conceived, contemplated and mastered at a stroke, then one stands amazed at the power of a mind which, even when young, was fit for unbelievable things, and which here achieves the seemingly impossible. [Schoenberg quoted in de LaGrange 1999, p. 905]

SYMPHONY NO. 8, PART TWO: THE SECOND PART OF GOETHE'S *FAUST*

Mahler sets to music the final scenes of *Faust*, Part Two, Act Five. We are in a mountainous wilderness, with anchorites chanting on about the abysses of forest and river gorge. As the aged Faust dies after performing engineering marvels that assist others (like reclaiming the land from the sea), but before Mephistopheles can claim his soul, angels take his soul toward heaven, to the "Glorious Mother." Along the way, we learn of the redemption of "three penitential women" and of Gretchen's redemption. The lines immediately preceding the closing chorus of the text invite us to join the "higher spheres," as Goethe (1832) writes:²

Mater Gloriosa [speaking to Gretchen about Faust]:

Komm! Hebe dich zu höhern Sphären! Come! Lift yourself to higher spheres!

Wenn er dich ahnet, folgt er nach. When he senses you, he follows after.

Chorus:

Komm! Komm! Come! Come!

Doctor Marianus and Chorus:

Blicket auf zum Retterblick, Look up to the redemptive gaze

Alle reuig Zarten, All contrite frail beings,

Euch zu sel'gem Glück That you may to blissful happiness

² All English translations from the German (Goethe 1832) are mine.

Dankend umzuarten! Be gratefully translated!
Werde jeder bess're Sinn May every better sense
Dir zum Dienst erbötig, Become ready for service to
 you,
Jungfrau, Mutter, Königin, Virgin, mother, queen,
Göttin, bleibe gnädig, Goddess, stay gracious,
Bleibe gnädig! Stay gracious!

Gnade is the German word for “grace.” The “higher spheres” bring to mind Mahler’s comment about “planets and suns revolving” and resounding in his symphony. The text, in repeating “*Komm!*,” rejoins the text of the Latin hymn, beginning with “*Veni*,” “Come,” inviting the Creator Spirit to come with grace into our minds and hearts. Here, however, the invitation comes *from* the other, from the *Mater Gloriosa*, whose gaze is redemptive to us frail creatures, for through it we can have access to the bliss she offers us as the impossible combination of virgin, mother, queen, and goddess, who is asked to stay gracious. Earlier she was addressed as “*Du Gnadenreiche! Du Ohnegleiche!*” (“You rich in grace! You unequalled!”). And again: “*Du Ohnegleiche, Du Strahlenreiche*” (“You unequalled, You richly radiating light”). Here we have an invitation to/from the pre-historic, unforgettable Other to join us frail mortals through grace and light.

The final lines of *Faust*, Part Two, which conclude the symphony, may be read (and heard) as the culminating affirmation of the presence in absence of *das Ding*, the nameless and indescribable, lost and impossible object of desire that draws us on:

Alles Vergängliche Everything transient
Ist nur ein Gleichnis; Is but a parable;
Das Unzulängliche That which falls short
Hier wird's Ereignis; Here becomes event;
Das Unbeschreibliche The indescribable
Hier ist's getan; Is here performed;
Das Ewig-Weibliche The Eternal-Womanly
Zieht uns hinan. Draws us onward.

Human experience as transient and mortal is “only” a sign, a likeness, whose object, pointed to through analogy, is something else that is not yet named. The inadequacy of human experience, its inability to reach out on its own and attain the nameless, is declared in this passage to be an “event,” a visible occurrence. The nameless, that which cannot be written, is here performed, put into action, engaged, made Real. The nameless is the “Eternal-Womanly,” Lacan’s “*la Chose maternelle*,” Freud’s *das Ding*, which draws us on as the impossible object of desire, and which here, in this final passage of the symphony’s performance, in its sonority, through sublimation, is present—but precisely as absent for human realization, as the impossible non-object of human desire.

The music does everything it can to show us this impossible object. And then it seems to do a bit more, by using silence: there is a momentary pause (between sections 202 and 203), for both chorus and orchestra, after “*Ist nur ein Gleichnis*” (“Is only a parable”)—as if to direct us to the unnamed term of the analogy (see the score in Mahler 1989, p. 246). The silence is like a gap that lets us “see” through the music to what the music itself “sees” and is trying to show us. The silence as inarticulate sets a limit to the music at this moment, insofar as the silence, as silence, articulates precisely what cannot be named—*das Ding* beyond the music, or what, in terms of the music, *is not*.

When the chorus repeats, with more insistence and force, *Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein*—(“Everything transient is only a—”), instead of hearing again the expected *Gleichnis*, we are given a single, loud percussive beat followed by the forte *Das Ewig*—(“The Eternal—”), in multiple repetition of the very vowels that open the Symphony, “*Veni*” (“Come”).

CONCLUSION

The Latin hymn presented in the first movement of Mahler’s Eighth Symphony is overtly a prayer for grace and an acknowledgment of our dependence on the Creator Spirit; while the end of Part Two

of the symphony has been called a “hymn to the action of grace” (de LaGrange 1999, p. 912). However, Theodor Adorno (1971) thinks otherwise; in writing of Part One, he tells us that

The invocation is addressed, according to an objective sense of form, to the music itself. That the Spirit should come is a plea that the composition should be inspired. By mistaking the consecrated wafer of the Spirit for itself, it confuses art and religion. [p. 139]

I agree that we should try not to confuse art with religion, or anything else (e.g., politics) with religion, but one can still make the effort to see how they may be related.

Adorno (1971) also states, in referring to the Eighth Symphony as the “magnum opus,” that

The magnum opus is the aborted, objectively impossible resuscitation of the cultic. It claims not only to be a totality in itself, but to create one in its sphere of influence. The dogmatic content from which it borrows its authority is neutralized in it to a cultural commodity. In reality it worships itself. [Its] Holy of Holies is empty. [p. 138]

Adorno here may be confusing commodity and art—or, rather, making such a Marxist analysis of late capitalism that we are enjoined from thinking that art and commodity may be distinct, even though we may buy and sell anything. He goes on to present with approval a remark of Hans Pfitzner (a composer who worked hard to ingratiate himself with Mahler through his wife—see Feder 2004, p. 131); here Adorno (1971) discusses

. . . the ritual art-works of late capitalism. Their Holy of Holies is empty. Hans Pfitzner’s jibe about the first movement, *Veni Creator Spiritus*: “But supposing He does not come,” touches with the percipience of rancor on something valid. [p. 138]

Adorno sees Mahler as double-crossed, or perhaps as double-crossing us into believing that something is present when it is not.

I would prefer to think that Mahler is engaged in a double traverse, addressing what is beyond the known through the incantation "Veni" in Part One. In Part Two, in the other direction, *we* are addressed (in Faust's place)—"*Komm! Komm!*"—by what lies beyond our subject-object field. The charge that this may be a lie is unwarranted in this context: it may be an illusion, for there is no other way to represent it except by another representation that, elaborated by musical genius, constitutes a massive illusion, intricately structured, detailed, and moving.

What I am calling the double traverse has to do with the semiotic impact of addressing and being addressed. Bakhtin (1981) claims that in any address, an ideal Other is framing the signifying field, guiding one's articulation toward clarity. I would say that any articulation, therefore, requires a kind of act of faith that the Other will comprehend my statement, for it is the other's potential comprehension that I set before me as I begin to speak (or write). In a like manner, the possibility of being addressed by an Other depends in part on my willingness to believe that the Other is capable of addressing me, and that I am capable of listening and responding. If I dismiss the possibility of being addressed, I will most likely miss the address, should one be made to me.

This double traverse, in which the addressor becomes somehow the addressee, suits George Steiner's (1989) view of all great art:

The archaic torso in Rilke's famous poem says to us: "change your life." So do any poem, play, painting, musical composition worth meeting. The voice of intelligible form, of the needs of direct address from which such form springs, asks: "what do you feel, what do you think of the possibilities of life, of the alternative shapes of being which are implicit in your experience of me, in our encounter?" [pp. 142-143]

That the Holy of Holies may be empty is but another way of saying that sublimation brings us to the edge of an abyss, the extimacy that is called *das Ding*, the unnameable in experience and the

void that marks the arc of human desire. When music brings us to this edge, we weep, we are flooded with longing, we find most other things around us (for the moment, at least) unsatisfying. Adorno (1971) appears to sense this when he writes:

Mahler's music holds fast to Utopia in the memory traces from childhood, which appear as if it were only for their sake that it would be worth living. But no less authentic for him is the consciousness that this happiness is lost, and only in being lost becomes the happiness it itself never was. [p. 145]

I would say that the experience of the lost, impossible object of desire in sublimation brings not happiness, but a kind of resonance with one's human condition, and that the experience of finding absence in this way is precisely what art gives us. We look and find nothing, *no-thing*—what Peirce called but another name for God, what Heidegger called *das Nichts*. We are cognitively entrained by the subject-object structuring of experience to go from object to object in our associations, to go from something to something, so that we expect to find something in the Holy of Holies. When we find nothing, we conclude that God does not exist. God may not exist, but to conclude this from finding no-thing simply attests to our own limitations. What is of interest is how we find the no-thing and how we are addressed by it, especially in a work of art.

Das Ewig-Weibliche as *das Ding*, the lost, impossible object of ecstatic desire, unattainable on this earth, reconciles the opposition between Adorno's (1971) viewpoint (that the Holy of Holies is empty [(p. 138)]) and Mahler's tragic experience (the void of extimacy). "I cannot give you the object," Mahler seems to be saying, "but I will bring you to the edge of the unnameable and bring you the joy of sublimation. And," he adds, with Goethe, "the unnameable is here performed."

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THE NAME OF THE HELPER: A NEW LOOK AT "RUMPELSTILTSKIN"

BY JOHN ROSEGRANT

The fairy tale of Rumpelstiltskin is studied in conjunction with related tales to provide a fuller understanding of its meaning than previous studies have done. The content of these tales depicts ambivalence about childhood magic and ambivalence about adult reality, which are uneasily resolved by eliminating magic and dwelling in a disenchanted world. Enchantment is retained formally in the telling of the story. To the extent that transference is enchantment, similar conflicts occur during psychoanalysis: is the patient better off adhering to transference or relinquishing it—or can it be integrated with day-to-day experience?

"Rumpelstiltskin" is a curiously complex fairy tale. A little man twice uses magic to save a maiden from death, but to save her a third time he demands her firstborn child in payment. He thus changes from kind hero to cruel villain. Nevertheless, nonmagical people in the fairy tale behave so abominably that Rumpelstiltskin remains the most sympathetic character. Why does he change so much in this story? And why does everyone else behave so badly? Psychoana-

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lytic answers to these questions are interesting not only because they help us understand the fairy tale better, but also because they speak to a general dilemma of human development that comes alive in transference.

Fairy tales merit psychoanalytic study because they have endured through time and among many peoples and cultures, indicating that they manifest basic psychic concerns (Bettelheim 1977; Tatar 1987, 2004). "Rumpelstiltskin" is one of a large group of fairy tales considered by folklorists to be variants of a basic theme that they label "The Name of the Helper." Folklorists (Dundes 1988; Tatar 1987) explicitly or implicitly fault most psychoanalytic approaches to fairy tales for limiting themselves only to the most familiar variant of each tale, leading to an overemphasis on the importance of details with limited generality, while overlooking important details not found in that particular variant. Considering multiple variants makes it possible to determine which story elements have broad importance and which are idiosyncratic to particular tellings.

For example, in the Brothers Grimm version of "Rumpelstiltskin" that I will relate, the title character is rewarded with a necklace and a ring the first two times that he helps the maiden, and then tears himself asunder in rage at the end of the tale, but these elements are found in no other variants and so cannot claim general psychic importance. As I will describe, many other variants of the Name of the Helper do not emphasize phallic sexuality as much as does "Rumpelstiltskin," so looking at this variant alone leads to an overemphasis on the role of phallic sexuality in the tale.

Our psychoanalytic experience with dreams and fantasies also leads us to recognize that the richest understanding of Name-of-the-Helper tales can be derived when we compare numerous variants, rather than limiting ourselves to only one. Looking at many variants fleshes out meaning, similar to the way in which, as analysts, we find that obtaining numerous associations can flesh out the meanings of an individual's fantasy.

THE FAIRY TALE AND ITS MEANINGS

Since “Rumpelstiltskin” is the variant of the Name of the Helper with which most readers will be familiar, we will begin here with a summary of the final version of the tale given by the Brothers Grimm (Tatar 2004): A poor miller tells the king that his beautiful daughter can spin straw into gold. He delivers his daughter to the king, who gives her a spinning wheel, puts her in a room full of straw, and tells her that she must spin it all into gold by the following morning or be put to death. The maiden weeps at the hopelessness of her situation.

Suddenly, a little gnome walks in and offers to do the job in exchange for the maiden’s necklace. He spins all the straw into gold, to the delight of the king when he returns in the morning. The king then puts the maiden in an even larger room full of straw, under the same conditions, and again she is saved by the gnome, this time in exchange for a ring. Pleased by the wealth she can give him, the king tells the maiden that he will marry her if she spins even more straw into gold on the third night. The gnome saves her again, but this time extracts the promise of the maiden’s firstborn child as payment.

The king marries the maiden, and after her first child is born, the gnome reappears to claim it. The queen is so distressed that the gnome takes pity and says that he will free her from her promise if she is able to guess his name within three days. For two days, she guesses both ordinary and odd names, all wrong. Then a messenger whom she had dispatched to learn names reports that he saw a solitary gnome dancing and chanting around a campfire, revealing that his name was Rumpelstiltskin. When the gnome returns, the queen first teases him by guessing ordinary names and then says, “Rumpelstiltskin.” In rage at being defeated, the little man tears himself asunder.

All variants of the Name of the Helper retain the basic theme that the power of a magical helper must be tamed by calling him by his unique and peculiar name. Generally, a woman in dire danger

that has been brought about by the selfish or foolish behavior of a caretaker is given magical help, but the magical helper demands an intolerable price. At the same time, the helper provides a way out: he will relinquish his demands if the woman can call him by his name—which she ultimately succeeds in doing. All other features, including the nature of the woman, the helper's demands, and the actual name of the helper, vary from story to story.

The invariant is the duality that forms the central meaning of the story: a profound ambivalence about magic and a profound ambivalence about reality, which are uneasily resolved by eliminating magic and dwelling in the world without it. In "Rumpelstiltskin," we see this ambivalence about magic in the form of Rumpelstiltskin himself, whose magic is depicted first as lifesaving, then cruelly demanding, and we see this ambivalence again when magic is once more enormously helpful in the form of a naming-magic that defeats Rumpelstiltskin. The world of magic is safe with a helper, but fantastically dangerous if the "helper" imposes his own needs rather than simply helping.

We see ambivalence about reality in "Rumpelstiltskin" in that, even though the maiden strives for and achieves the state of marriage to a king, this king and everyone else in the real world are very unappealing: both her father and the king (her husband) are greedy and totally lacking in empathy for the maiden, with the king even threatening her with death unless she satisfies his greed. The only character who shows any kindness and generosity is Rumpelstiltskin, who first succors the maiden, and then has empathy for her distress after he has demanded her child, freely offering her a way to escape his demand.

This trope is even stronger when one notices that the heroine herself is sadistic in teasing Rumpelstiltskin with false guesses when she already knows his name. Furthermore, many story variants feature a maiden who is herself lazy and gluttonous, so that there is no appealing nonmagical character in the story at all. For example, in the beginning of an English variant, "Tom Tit Tot" (Clodd 1898), a peasant woman bakes five pies and leaves them in the care of her daughter, who misunderstands what her mother

intended and eats them all herself. The mother begins singing, "My daughter has eaten five pies today," but when the king rides by and asks what she is singing, she changes it to "My daughter has spun five skeins today." This catches the greedy king's attention, and the story continues. In this and similar variants, the daughter is provocatively foolish and greedy. Her mother's behavior is not the selfish boast of the father in "Rumpelstiltskin," but rather a foolish, ineffectual, frustrated response. "Tom Tit Tot" and similar variants have a comic effect unlike that of "Rumpelstiltskin," but whether comic or played straight, reality is grim in Name-of-the-Helper tales.

The resolution of these ambivalences about magic and reality is uneasy because it is accomplished by suppression rather than through any form of integration. Magic and help (both represented by the character of Rumpelstiltskin) are completely eliminated, and nothing suggests that the abominable character of nonmagical people will be changed. The story does not move in other possible directions, such as retaining magic while controlling its power, or even using it to improve nonmagical people.

One useful point of view for understanding fairy tales is to appreciate that they depict a process of development (Ashliman 2004; Bettelheim 1977; Tatar 1987, 2004), and this point of view clarifies the resolution of Name-of-the-Helper tales. Individual development in "Rumpelstiltskin" can be seen in the maiden's progress from unmarried daughter to married queen. Development can also be seen in the change from the maiden's reliance on magic to her repudiation of it by naming Rumpelstiltskin. Freud (1911, 1913b) demonstrated many parallels between belief in magic and forms of childhood thought, and indicated that a decrease in magical thinking was one aspect of the development from primacy of the pleasure principle to primacy of the reality principle.

Somewhat more subtly, development in "Rumpelstiltskin" can be seen in the way magic progresses from miraculous action (spinning gold) to word-magic (defeating the helper by speaking his name). This is one of the steps that Ferenczi (1913) described in the development of a sense of reality. Therefore, this fairy tale

views development—that is, development from childhood roles, action, and magical thinking, to adult roles and language—as necessarily, and unhappily, accompanied by the disenchantment of the world. Adulthood has no room for childhood magic, so developmental progression entails the elimination of earlier types of experience, but adulthood itself is unpleasant. “Rumpelstiltskin” manifests ambivalence regarding the disenchantment of the world.

Another aspect of ambivalence about development seen in “Rumpelstiltskin” is its devaluation of adult sexuality. In psychoanalytic studies, the Rumpelstiltskin figure himself has usually been considered a penis symbol. Freud (1913a) was the first to articulate this formulation, basing it both on a patient’s dream and on the manifest content of the fairy tale: the little man visiting the maiden in an enclosed room represents the penis entering the vagina. Other manifest elements of the tale support this interpretation: the little man’s magical powers are like a child’s fantasies of what the penis can accomplish (Miller 1985; Rowley 1951); spinning is symbolic of masturbation (Kulish 1991); the maiden’s ignorance of the little man’s name represents repressive ignorance of the genitals (Kulish 1991; Rand 2000).

Rand (2000) most fully developed this formulation, and showed that, more specifically, Rumpelstiltskin symbolizes an impotent penis. Rand’s primary evidence was etymological: *rumpel* is cognate with the English *rumple*, and a *stilt* is a post or pillar, so *rumpelstilt* is something that can be hard and tall, but is rumped—the flaccid penis. This interpretation is strengthened by the ending of the character’s name, *skin*—whether we take the word at its English face value, in which case it evokes wrinkled foreskin, or whether we consider the German suffix *-chen* that was mistranslated as *skin*, since *-chen* is a diminutive that emphasizes the smallness of the stilt. Rand stated that this interpretation also explains why Rumpelstiltskin demands to be given a child: although he can work magic, the one thing that is absolutely impossible for a flaccid penis is to produce a baby.

An additional level of phallic-sexual interpretation points to Rumpelstiltskin as an androgynous figure (Rinsley and Bergmann

1983). What he can do better than anyone—spinning—is quintessentially women’s work. Kulish (1991) thinks that he can be seen to symbolize a clitoris as much as a devalued phallus.

These phallic meanings of “Rumpelstiltskin” are important, but it is necessary to contextualize them by examining more variants of the Name of the Helper. This broader view shows that these stories illustrate broader ambivalence about development, of which the phallic meaning is merely a specific manifestation. The helper’s name differs in each story, but some general comments can be made that apply to all the names of the helper: Rumpelstiltskin, Tom Tit Tot (English), Titteli Ture (Swedish), Peerie Fool (Scottish), Sili go Dwt (Welsh), and so on.¹ In each story, the helper’s name is peculiar and unique, not part of society’s usual repertoire of names. Some variants emphasize this by having the maiden incorrectly guess a variety of ordinary names, to the amusement of the magical helper. Furthermore, the name is part of the helper’s essence, not a mere symbol, since pronouncing it gives the maiden power to dismiss or control him. With these qualities, the story illustrates grandiosity and omnipotence, the fantastical self as opposed to conventional reality.

To trace the etymology of each name would require an expert in many languages. I will touch only briefly on the meanings of the names listed in the previous paragraph. *Tom Tit Tot* combines the common name *Tom* with *tit*, meaning both *small* and *breast*, and *tot*, meaning *small* and *child*. *Titteli Ture* combines the common Swedish name *Ture* (Thor) with *titteli*, the first part of *titteli-tut*, which is Swedish for *peekaboo*, so this Name of the Helper means *Peeka Thor*. *Tom Tit Tot* and *Titteli Ture* connote infancy, play, and orality.

Peerie is dialect for *little*, so *Peerie Fool* is *little fool*. *Sili* in *Sili go Dwt* is cognate with *silly*, and is found in several slight variants of the Name of the Helper, although the etymology of the rest of the name is unclear (Rhys 1900). These names, therefore, add the connotations of foolishness and irrationality. This interpretation is strengthened in the variant *Peerie Fool* by the description of some

¹ For these and other variants, see Ashliman (2000-2005).

of the Peerie Folk (fairies) as having eyes in place of nipples, which is a typical anal-world fantasy (Rosegrant 1996).

This collection of names, then, locates the theme of the Name of the Helper in narcissistic anxieties about, and longings for, childishness, dependency, foolishness, and irrationality, together with compensatory grandiosity and omnipotence. In this context, the impotent phallus of Rumpelstiltskin is one more manifestation of childish anxiety, as well as compensatory grandiosity achieved by devaluing adulthood.

Rand (2000) plausibly interpreted Rumpelstiltskin's demand for the maiden's firstborn child as indicating that the one thing that an impotent penis cannot produce for itself, no matter what magic it can wield, is a child. But there appear to be just as many variants of the Name of the Helper in which the magical helper demands not a child, but the maiden herself to be his wife. Just as the one thing unachievable by an impotent penis is a child, the one thing unachievable by childhood magic and fantasy is a mature love relationship. Sexual maturity is a crucial aspect of mature love, but so are many other qualities such as concern, mutuality, and the ability to integrate multiple points of view. These qualities are entirely foreign to Rumpelstiltskin, who does a solitary dance around a campfire, gleefully chanting about how the maiden will never guess his unique name.

The pivotal moment of "Rumpelstiltskin"—as is indicated by the folklorists' term "The Name of the Helper"—comes when the maiden, by naming him, destroys the little man's power over her and thus saves her child. In a phallic interpretation of the story, this represents becoming fully adult by overcoming the repressive inability to name and understand phallic sexuality (Rand 2000; Rowley 1951). To the extent that psychoanalysis consists of making the unconscious conscious, or replacing thing-presentations with word-presentations, "Rumpelstiltskin" can become a metaphor for our work: "The purpose of analytic work, then, if we continue the Rumpelstiltskin analogy, is to discover Rumpelstiltskin's name" (Rowley 1951, p. 194). But this valorizing of naming overlooks two points: first, when the maiden overcomes Rumpelstiltskin and

defeats his magic, she is still using magic. And second, she uses this magic to eliminate rather than to understand. Let us look at these points in turn.

It is a truism that using language is an enormous developmental achievement that is necessary to achieve adulthood, however that is defined. But because of its enormous power, language can also be used in ways that partake of magic and not of reality. Ferenczi (1913) indicated that an early use of language is as word-magic—an advance over action-oriented magic, but magic nonetheless. Freud (1913b) discussed naming-magic in particular as connected to widespread “primitive” beliefs based on the equivalence of name and identity, so that one’s true name partakes of one’s essence or soul, and knowing the true name of another gives control over him. Steingart (1995) describes such use of language as enacted symbols, wherein words do not function as symbols but as direct actions unmediated by true symbolism.

By using naming-magic to eliminate Rumpelstiltskin, the maiden eliminates danger and magic. As she moves on to marriage to a man who loves her only for the wealth she creates, and who would have killed her had she not had Rumpelstiltskin’s help, this step seems bittersweet at best. Life now will be lacking in good magic as well as bad, and the only character who showed at least occasional generosity is gone. What the maiden has done is akin to what Freud (1915) warned against in his discussion of the complexities of dealing with transference love. He stated that many people would recommend simply telling the patient who falls in love with her analyst to be realistic and to renounce her love; but, Freud writes, this would be “senseless . . . just as though, after summoning up a spirit from the underworld by cunning spells, one were to send him down again without having asked him a single question” (1915, p. 164). Doing so would deprive the patient of the opportunity of learning what her love means and making this a part of her life. The maiden in “Rumpelstiltskin” loses the opportunity to understand what magic means to her and to make it part of her life.

To summarize, Name-of-the-Helper tales depict ambivalence and discouragement about psychological development. Progress

toward adulthood is longed for to escape the terrors and helplessness of childhood and to reach the opportunity to experience adult sexuality, marriage, and children, but at the same time this progress is seen as replacing the pleasures of childhood with a new set of terrors. Childhood is seen as the realm of magic, both good and bad—a time of special lacks and special powers. It is safe only with a helper present; it can be fantastically dangerous if the “helper” imposes his own needs. Adulthood is devalued as a realm of cruelty and selfishness, and as lacking in magic and generosity. Adult sexuality is mocked while orality and anality are favored. This sharp dichotomy between earlier and later stages results in a grim picture of life. All the same, this grim picture has wide psychological appeal to listeners, whether by the way it expresses these fantasies of magical childhood, abuse in childhood, disenchanted adulthood, and marriage, sex, and parenthood in complex wishful and defensive interplay; or by resonating with actual experiences of child abuse.

All this in a fairy tale! It may well be objected that the usual experience when hearing/telling/reading the Name of the Helper is not melancholy or distress at the inevitable disenchantment of life, that the typical listener experiences some mixture of excitement, fear, amusement, sympathy, etc., and the overall experience is fun and playful. This objection is valid, but it does not contradict my interpretation of the content of these stories; rather, it shows that the content meaning is contextualized in a process of communication that creates the opposite effect. The ambivalence about development that is the unconscious message of the story’s content is reproduced in the contradiction between the content of the story and the process of telling it. The Name-of-the-Helper tales are enchanting stories about disenchantment.

TRANSFERENCE AS ENCHANTMENT

This way of understanding Name-of-the-Helper tales has special interest for psychoanalysis because one aspect of transference is that it is a form of enchantment. By this I mean two things: that transfer-

ence instills experience with meaning and power, and that transference is a wishful illusion, so that the meaning and power it instills are not primarily reality based. By *enchantment*, I do not mean to imply a pleasant experience—although enchantment may be pleasant, it may also be the product of dangerous sorcery. Rumpelstiltskin exemplifies this, as his magic changes from generous to greedy.

To the extent that transference is enchantment, we see that all patients find themselves in the dilemma depicted by Name-of-the-Helper tales as transference develops: are they better off adhering to their transferences or relinquishing them? Is this an either/or choice, as in the content of the Name of the Helper, or is there room to maintain aspects of transference enchantment in more mature life, as is suggested by the process of telling the Name of the Helper?

These are profound questions for both patient and analyst, whose answers, conscious or unconscious, will greatly influence the intensity of the transference and the nature of its resolution. I will not attempt to answer them here, but will close with the hope that this look at the theme of the Name of the Helper in fairy tales encourages study of this aspect of transference at the same time that it entertains.

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HABLE CON ELLA (TALK TO HER) THROUGH THE LENS OF GENDER

BY JUDITH A. YANOF

In the 2002 film Hable con Ella (Talk to Her), Spanish writer-director Pedro Almodóvar plays with the ambiguity of gender, transcending conventional assumptions about “masculinity” and “femininity.” Each of the four main characters holds complex, varied, and, in some cases, gender-bending gender identifications. The theme of gender plasticity is a prominent motif in this film. However, underlying the narrative, there is also a perverse subtext that relies on rigidly binary gender stereotypes to define relationships between men and women. Both these views of gender, which operate dialectically, create a complex tapestry through which Almodóvar explores his characters’ problems in attaining intimacy.

INTRODUCTION

Talk to Her (2002) is a film about people who desperately want to connect, but, because of their psychological underpinnings, are unable to sustain intimate mutual relationships. The film most deeply and explicitly articulates the inner struggle of Benigno, the central character of the film. In his quest for attachment, his inability to hold onto a differentiated and separate sense of self leads to a tragic outcome. However, all the characters in this film find it difficult to achieve the closeness and intimacy they strive for. In the

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well-crafted structure of Pedro Almodóvar's plot, the four main characters deftly serve as foils for each other; for some, personal boundaries are too permeable, and for others, too closed.

Intimacy is metaphorically developed in this film as an act of communication, the ability to be in conversation with another. In Spanish, *Hable con Ella* literally means "talk with her." The English title of the film is *Talk to Her*, and although this translation conveys a meaning close to the Spanish, "talk to her" doesn't indicate whether the other is actually listening to what is being said, or even participating in the conversation. It is this subtle and not so subtle distinction that Almodóvar brings into sharp focus.

Gender plays a major role in *Talk to Her*,¹ as it does in all of Almodóvar's films. For this filmmaker, gender is a highly salient aspect of subjectivity and identity. Almodóvar constantly plays with the ambiguity of gender, gender choice, and gender role. In *Talk to Her*, he provocatively questions how gendered "gendered" character traits really are. These binary character traits have come to be culturally and historically associated with one gender and conventionally labeled as "feminine" or "masculine." These traits lie along a spectrum of polar opposites, such as passive/active, submissive/dominant, subjective/objective, and permeable/closed.

On one level, Almodóvar uses gender in this film to mark otherness. For example, all the film's characters choose someone of the opposite sex to have a relationship with. It is these "different others" who are hard to get close to. The main character says of his comatose patient early in the film that, since a woman's brain is a mystery to a man to begin with, a coma simply makes her somewhat more mysterious. He talks about women in the abstract as if they are all the same—but, most importantly, they are different from men.

In contradiction to this remark, which conveys the cultural stereotypical view that men and women are so fundamentally differ-

¹ Lichtenstein (2005) and D'Lugo (2006) both discuss gender issues in this film in some overlapping ways, although their emphasis and conclusions are different than mine.

ent that they cannot understand each other, each of the four main characters holds complex, varied, and, in some cases, gender-bending gender identifications and subjectivities. Time and again, Almodóvar creates a situation to which one can apply a conventional gender reading, but that conventional perspective is undone by the sequence that comes next. In this way, traditional assumptions about gender are playfully deconstructed. How gender and difference (or otherness) affect the ability to be intimate is part of the underlying theme of *Talk to Her*, about which Almodóvar raises many questions but provides few answers.

Almodóvar sees the problem of making meaningful contact as part of the human condition, but he remains hopeful about the transformative power of love. The kind of love and the gender of the lovers are less important. Benigno's life ends tragically in *Talk to Her*, but Benigno has been a catalyst for change in those he has come close to. In the end, one can conclude that human connections are hard to come by, whether one is male or female. Gender is neither so certain, so differentiated, nor so binary. Love can be found in weird situations, and we are left with the unsettling ambiguity that even perverse love turns out to be redemptive.

While the motif of gender plasticity, with its tone of playfulness and liberation from gender stereotypes, is a prominent theme, it plays out against a more unsettling view of gender that lies below the surface. The narrative of *Talk to Her* rests on a perverse subtext that implicitly relies on rigidly binary gender stereotypes to define its male/female relationships. For instance, although the film appears to be about both men and women, *Talk to Her* becomes a story about men, with their subjectivity at its center. The men clearly are the more important and more nuanced characters. While the women start out strong, independent, and (importantly) rejecting of the men, by the end of the film, they wind up comatose. These vibrant women have been transformed into an extreme form of "feminine" stereotype—passive, beautiful to look at, with nothing to say. The perverse subtext might then read: when women become too powerful, they will be seen as danger-

ous and will need to be diminished. It is this contradiction between a challenge of traditional gender stereotypes and an unconscious return to them that makes the emotional tone of this film so complexly layered.

I will begin by presenting a brief summary of the film and commenting on its structure. I will next talk about each of the main characters in terms of their gender identifications and gender relationships. I will then discuss the major themes in the movie and how they impact on each other through the lens of gender.

THE STORY

The narrative of *Talk to Her* involves the unfolding of two love relationships, one between Benigno and Alicia and the other between Marco and Lydia. Everything in this highly improbable story is doubled (Backstein 2003). The doublings make the narrative seem less particular, more universal. As the sequence of one love story moves forward in time, the other moves backward. The characters meet when the two women serendipitously wind up in the same hospital, both in a coma, and the two men befriend each other. There is a third love story in this movie—one that never becomes fully explicit, yet we are always aware of its undercurrents: the relationship between the two men. It is their relationship that becomes the most intimate, the most mutual, and the most complex.

Benigno (Javier Camara) is a private nurse in a hospital where he spends all his time taking care of a comatose patient, Alicia (Leonor Watling). Alicia is a young, very beautiful dancer who has been in a coma for four years as the result of an automobile accident. Benigno talks to her as if they are in ordinary conversation, although she cannot respond. At first, we understand his familiar chatter as part of his nursing technique. However, we soon come to realize that Benigno's life has been taken over by his charge. He spends more and more of his time with Alicia. He cares for her during the day, and then he substitutes for another

nurse's night shifts. He spends his free time going to events that Alicia might have gone to had she been well, like the ballet. When he returns, he tells her about all that he has seen, and he believes that she is listening to him.

The second love story moves forward in time. Marco (Dario Grandinetti) is a journalist who writes travel books. He watches a television interview of Lydia (Rosaria Flores), a famous matador. The interview ends as the TV host cruelly exposes Lydia's rejection by her former lover, who is also a famous matador. Lydia is visibly shaken. Marco feels compelled to meet Lydia and tries to set up an interview with her. Marco is also reeling from a failed relationship, although his breakup occurred many years before. Marco and Lydia become involved with each other on the rebound, but they are both painfully attached to their past lovers.

In the midst of forging this new romance, Lydia is gored by a bull. She winds up comatose in the same hospital where Benigno cares for Alicia. Benigno attempts to instruct Marco on how to care for Lydia, but Marco cannot talk to her or even touch her. He feels profoundly alienated from the lifeless Lydia, although he dutifully visits her. It is in this setting that Marco and Benigno share time as they wait for the women to awaken. The two men are superficially very different, but they become friends because they share the same circumstances and are both lonely. They begin to talk and to bond.

The film's tightly crafted narrative is linked by five remarkable artistic performances: two dance segments, each from a Pina Bausch ballet, marking the beginning and the end of the film; a song performed by the popular Brazilian musician, Caetano Velosa; a bullfight filmed in slow motion; and a silent film-within-a-film, *Shrinking Lover*. These performances are carefully woven into the main film's narrative, but also stand independently as statements that are moving and communicative in their own right. They are Almodóvar's homage to other artists who move him. As elements of *Talk to Her*, they serve to remind us that what we are watching is also art, not real life.

THE BEGINNING: THE METAPHOR OF THE BALLET

When the film opens, we see Benigno and Marco sitting next to each other in a theater, watching a Pina Bausch ballet. In the opening ballet, *Café Muller*, two women dressed in nightgowns or slips (they are barely dressed) are blindly moving, sometimes lurching, across the stage. Their eyes are closed. Perhaps they are sleepwalking. A man dressed in a suit rushes about distractedly, trying to remove obstacles, tables and chairs, from their paths. The man is apparently trying to save the women from harm, but his efforts feel desperate and likely to fail.

The ballet is a prelude. Metaphorically, it sets the stage for two prominent themes in *Talk to Her*; it is both a commentary on the fragility of human connection, and the director's initial musings about gender. The women dancers cannot see each other or their surroundings. They are isolated, do not touch, and their movements are only randomly connected to each other. They are undifferentiated as individuals. However, they appear to be suffering. The man, who is dressed and who can see, is preoccupied with trying to protect them, but is essentially unable to communicate with them in a meaningful way. The differentiation among the three dancers occurs strictly along gender lines. The ballet segment presents a caricature of conventional male and female gender roles.

Following the ballet, the camera immediately cuts to the audience, where the two men are seated. Tears run down Marco's face as he watches the performance, and Benigno looks over at him with sympathy and interest. The men do not know each other; they will meet only later in the film. But they are the first couple we see. They are introduced by the filmmaker as a possible couple (Backstein 2003; D'Lugo 2006), and throughout the movie, their relationship inhabits an intermediate space; they are a couple and not a couple. This juxtaposition of two men as a possible couple, with one of them in tears, quietly subverts and deconstructs the conventional rendering of gender that is presented in the ballet. This happens many times in the course of the film.

As is the case in many of this movie's scenes between couples, the two men sit side by side, facing straight ahead, hardly looking at each other. Of course, they are watching a performance, but as this positioning of couples repeats itself throughout the film, we realize it is Almodóvar's visual representation of an underlying incapacity to engage, a fault line in the human connection. It is expressed strikingly and metaphorically in *Café Muller*, where people careen about oblivious to each other, and is repeated more subtly in the scenes that follow. When Marco and Lydia are together, they are most often positioned side by side, sometimes seated in a car next to each other, and rarely face to face. When Benigno talks to Alicia, her eyes are closed; she is totally unresponsive. By contrast, only at the end of the movie does this configuration between couples change significantly.

THE CHARACTERS

Benigno

As Benigno's story moves backward in time, we learn that he has spent most of his adult life physically caring for women. As an adolescent, he took care of his mother, who kept him unusually tied to her. We also learn that he is a voyeur and that he loved Alicia—or was obsessively fixated on her—long before her accident. He watched her daily through the window of her dance studio, located across the street from his mother's apartment. He also stalked her. He once followed her home and gained access to her apartment by pretending to seek treatment from her father, a psychiatrist. During this subterfuge, he came upon her undressed as she left the shower. She was terrified and wanted no part of him. Thus, it is through a bizarre set of coincidences that he is later brought into a physically intimate relationship with the woman whom he once loved from a distance and who rejected him.

Benigno's gender ambiguity is a central feature of his character. He is a soft, effeminate man. He is most comfortable and competent in the role of caretaker or nurse, a traditionally "feminine" role. In this role, he talks to Marco as an expert on women. He says

that he is an expert because he has spent night and day with his mother, an assertion that makes us chuckle. When it comes to approaching a woman outside of the hospital, however, we see that he is backward and inept. When Alicia's father, the psychiatrist, asks him about his past sexual experiences, he says that he hasn't had any, and we believe him. When he stalks Alicia and comes upon her in the shower, his sexuality becomes unquestionably creepy.

Knowing something about Alicia's past reaction to Benigno, we can see that caring for an unresponsive woman is a safer situation for him. Because Alicia is in a coma, he can be with her without having to contend with her as a separate person who has a mind and will of her own. In fact, Benigno lives in a fantasy world in which he can create Alicia according to his wishes. In his mind, they are a couple. In one very funny but disturbing scene, he tells Marco that he wishes to marry Alicia. When Marco reacts with horror and concern, Benigno, unfazed, indignantly argues that he and Alicia get on better than most married couples. Her lack of voice goes completely unmentioned by him.

The narrative of this film takes a breathtaking and surprising turn when Benigno impregnates Alicia. We learn of this through an interesting technical device. Almodóvar inserts a film within a film, a short silent film with explicit sexual content to represent Benigno's transgressive act. *Shrinking Lover*² is the turning point of the film, but we do not realize what it signifies until we have returned to the original narrative. The use of *Shrinking Lover* makes Benigno's sexual violation of Alicia surreal, metaphorical, and indirect. The silent film serves to distance us from the reality of the rape, just as it serves to deny the hostility in Benigno's obsession. Nevertheless, the content of this film-within-a-film gives us a deeply nuanced look into Benigno's mental life—his erotic ambitions and desires, his unconscious fears and dilemmas.

² *Shrinking Lover* was written by Almodóvar earlier and adapted for use in this film. In making a silent film, Almodóvar wanted to stay true to the technical and narrative rules of early silent movies (D'Lugo 2006), and he therefore shot this segment in black and white, used a tripod, eliminated moving shots, and had the actors walk in and out of the frame.

The silent movie is about a man who is too fat, so his beautiful scientist lover gives him a potion to lose weight. However, she has made a big mistake: instead of making him lose weight, the potion makes him shrink. He gets smaller and smaller. When his lover goes to sleep, the man explores her naked body as a landscape, unrestricted. He then enters her enormous vagina to pleasure her, but gets swallowed up forever. The tone of this silent film is on the edge—both funny and tragic, both erotic and grotesque. It is situated on the brink of obscenity, but it lands sure-footedly in the realm of emotion. One never loses one's identification with the man who is losing himself. This is Benigno's wish, his fear, and his fate.

If we look at this male dilemma from a developmental perspective, the woman, like the mother of a man's childhood, is both desirable and necessary for life. However, when too big and too powerful, she can be dangerous to the boy's sense of autonomy and manhood. The woman's satisfaction becomes dependent on the boy's ultimate sacrifice of self, if he feels he must forfeit his agency or sexuality in order to remain close to her. The fear of intimacy is the fear of engulfment and loss of the self. In the silent film, the woman must be put to sleep in order for the man to explore her territory, like Alicia in her coma.

In developmental terms, we would say that the young boy needs to find ways to separate from his powerful, beloved mother, and to experience himself as someone different from her, both in terms of gender and in terms of agency or self. This was something that Benigno was incapable of doing during his mother's lifetime; he could not make a life of his own. He could not become attached to anyone but her, except in fantasy. He could not inhabit his own phallic sexuality. He got trapped with the mother whom he loved and hated, but could not relinquish.

Yet the fear of intimacy is a complex compromise formation. The fear is in part a response to the strong underlying pull to be reunited with the mother, to never have to separate from her, to merge with her. Benigno loves Alicia not as a separate, differentiated other; he wants to *become* her. He appropriates her interests

in dance and silent movies. He sees things through her eyes and sensibilities. He appoints himself to function as her agent in the world, and in the end he loses himself entirely to her. In fact, the sacrifice of his life is necessary to bring her to life, quite literally, in this film.

Of course, this kind of dilemma involving a threatening wish for merger is not gender specific; it is not simply one of the potential miscarriages of masculine development. Otherness is also an aspect of generational difference, for the parent is big and the child is small. Children of both sexes can have difficulties establishing a separate sense of self from a parent who is too dominating, and this dilemma can be replayed and repeated in future intimate relationships.

Alicia

The first time we see Alicia, she is in a coma. Her voluptuous body is exposed through long sequences of film in which she is turned, bathed, dressed, and massaged by Benigno. The camera lingers over her body lovingly and intimately, but her body is often filmed without her head in view and therefore without facial expression, without personhood. Benigno talks to her with caring and kindness. However, the scenes of her nakedness create an uncomfortable tension between a visual image that is coolly beautiful (cool because Alicia, though vulnerable, is lifeless and does not respond) and that which is erotic, sensuous, and has perverse overtones. It is the male nurse's access to her body, his possession of it without her knowledge (and our unbarred access to her most private parts and functions), that makes us uncomfortable. The camera invades her privacy, as does her nurse's manifestly benign (hence the name *Benigno*) routines and ministrations in the hospital setting. This ambiguity gives the film its complex emotional tone long before we become aware that Benigno's care is not simply benign.

Alicia is the epitome of passivity. Her comatose state makes her boundaries entirely permeable. As in the ballet *Café Muller*, women's bodies are exposed, but men's are not. The corporeality

of her body, with its classic beauty, her vulnerability, and her passivity, make Alicia stereotypically “feminine.” However, as we come to know her as she was before the accident, we recognize that she has a wider, more balanced breadth of “gendered” traits. She has lost her strength and agency as a result of her accident, but childbirth, a biological capacity belonging specifically and exclusively to women, brings her back to life and returns those lost powers to her.

Lydia

Lydia, like Benigno, is a character full of gender ambiguity. She is both a fearless matador and a woman secretly terrified of snakes. Her choice of profession is unusual for a woman, and we might speculate that it is a counterphobic attempt to deal with her warder-off fear of men and their phallic otherness, represented by both the snake and the bull. However, her interest in participating in this dangerous performance is also presented as something she does for the love of a man—first to win her father’s affection, then to needle her rejecting lover.

Like Benigno’s tie to his mother, we might guess that Lydia’s tie to her *banderillero* father is a closeness born of a wish for merger and gender identification, a relationship in which her own agency was set aside, if not submerged, to stay close to the significant adult in her life. And in her fury at her ex-lover, she agrees to engage in many more bullfights than she would ordinarily fight. This is a mixed communication to him: it is both a competitive challenge, and at the same time a barely concealed suicidal threat that begs for a response from him.

The ritual dressing of Lydia for the bullfight is one of the most interesting visual sequences in the film. This is another instance in which the camera focuses on the female body, undressed, without the woman’s face or facial expressions mediating the view. Lydia’s body is slender, muscular, and androgynous. She is cross-dressed before our eyes, which is both fascinating and unsettling. The image of the cross-dresser is always provocative because it chal-

lenges one's usual sense of male/female binary categories (Garber 1992). In this ritual dressing of Lydia, Almodóvar makes us pay particular attention to the transformation, which shows the difference between inside and outside, between who one is and who one seems to be. As spectators, we do not see simply *female* or *male*, but both and neither (Garber 1992).

Another significant aspect of this ritual dressing is how tightly laced up the woman is. Being so tightly laced suggests that there is a considerable degree of constriction necessary in order for her to play this particularly "masculine" role. Perhaps this is Almodóvar's metaphor for engagement in any rigidly "gendered" role. Bullfighting is a sport for "macho" men. Yet, once again, the stereotype is deconstructed as the camera draws our attention to the toreador's traditional costume, with its ornate golden embroidery, stockings, and ballet slipper-style shoes, all of which we might easily regard as "feminine." When we see Lydia perform, we cannot tell whether she is male or female. Shown in slow motion, the bullfight is a stunning visual spectacle, like a ballet performance, but we cannot fully ignore that the attack on the bull, and later on Lydia, is brutal, bloody, and violent.

Marco

Marco is superficially a different kind of man from Benigno, a man of the world, yet he, like Benigno, also falls in love only through his eyes (Backstein 2003) and from a distance. When Marco arranges to meet Lydia after the television show, he says that he wants to interview her—not because of his interest in bullfighting, but because she is "desperate." In this relationship, masculinity and femininity are again first conveyed in very conventional terms. Lydia is vulnerable. As a woman recently spurned, she is made to appear emotionally unstable. When Marco drives Lydia home after their first date, she finds a snake in her kitchen that terrifies her. Marco kills the snake, but Lydia is afraid to be left alone. Marco and Lydia become a couple by virtue of an act of rescue.

While Marco is eager to jump in and rescue the woman, Almodóvar throws in a surprise note. After Marco performs the violent act of killing the snake, tears run down his face for the second time—tears that he does not try to hide. At some point, Marco tells Lydia in a flashback that it is his memories of another desperate woman, his last lover, Angela, and of his failed attempts at *her* rescue that have overwhelmed him with feeling. Nevertheless, the meaning of Marco's tears remains ambiguous; the tears deconstruct the superficial message of conventional masculinity. This is a man who cries easily, a man who is vulnerable and can be made desperate by his own secret sadness.

One of the most moving parts of the film is the live performance of the popular Brazilian singer Caetano Veloso, who sings "Cucurrucucu Paloma" in a hauntingly beautiful falsetto. This is a Mexican song about a dove that is suffering unto death for its lost mate. Marco sheds tears as he listens to the concert. The performance and the song, full of sad longing, become the audience's reference point for the characters—particularly for the men, and most particularly for Marco. The dove and Veloso's falsetto introduce a "feminine" element into this mournful refrain. The song foreshadows death and brings in those who are lost to Marco. Men are identified as loners who yearn for a closeness that eludes them. In fact, the whole film is suffused with this sadness, and as an underlying theme, it is this aspect of the movie that moves us so deeply.

Yet despite his tears, we also recognize that Marco is emotionally closed. He is initially the most isolated of the characters and the only one who is presented without a family. When he cries at the concert, although he has come with Lydia, he rushes out to be alone with his sadness. As we come to learn more about Marco, we realize that neither Lydia's strength nor her desperate vulnerability make her attractive to him. Her attraction lies in the fact that her heart belongs to someone else. She is never entirely engaged with him, although she is very jealous of his past relationship with Angela. Like Benigno, Marco seems to be in love with women who will keep a safe distance from him.

In one of the film's deliciously ironic moments, as Marco is driving with Lydia, he is so involved in recounting his own sad story about a past love that he does not let Lydia tell him what she needs to say—that she has reconciled with her matador boyfriend. We realize that Marco is no more interested in hearing from Lydia than Benigno is in hearing from Alicia.

At first, Marco and Benigno seem very different from each other, and, in a way, foils to one another: one a man of the world, the other a virgin; one a conventionally masculine man, the other of somewhat ambiguous gender. However, as the story evolves, it is their similarity that becomes most compelling: both men need to keep women at a safe distance. While Benigno's boundaries are open and fluid, Marco's are tightly and defensively closed. Nonetheless, their underlying fear of intimacy, though unequal in intensity, is not dissimilar. In both men, this fear seems to be based on the imagined threat of being consumed by the woman to whom they become attached. The mysterious interiority of women is both attractive and forbidding. As we come to learn, Marco has had a terrible time in relinquishing Angela; unable to mourn and move on, it has taken him years to stop thinking about his last desperate woman. As is the case with the man in the Pina Bausch ballet, all that traveling, all that movement, is actually an act of desperation.

Both men are initially presented as invested in a kind of worship of women, an enshrinement of them, holding a view of women as fragile and in need of protection. However, this labeling of women as *other* paradoxically does not help either man get close to them. Underneath the idealization, there is a split-off, unarticulated wariness of women, who lose their voices in this film. What dances elusively below the surface of the film is Benigno's sadism. Ambivalence toward women and revenge against them are expressed in the perverse undercurrent that serves as a subtext to the narrative. A woman is beautiful and adored but winds up silenced. You can talk to her but she cannot talk back. And yet, even these comatose, incapacitated women have the power to make the men lose their bearings. The conventional gender reading is constantly being constructed and then turned on its head.

MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

Throughout this film, Almodóvar seems to be playing with the nature of gender and those individual traits that have come to be culturally and historically associated more with one gender than the other. Such gendered traits are often treated as if they are biological universals. In reality, however, they are not innate biological givens; people create their own sense of gender identity and adopt their own gender roles based on many complex factors. These factors include the reality of one's biological body and bodily experience, interactions with individual caretakers who convey unique implicit and explicit attitudes about gender, the participation in a larger sociocultural milieu, and the interactions of an individual's gender development with other developing aspects of self, including ambitions, conflicts, and compromises (Chodorow 2006; Harris 2005; Yanof 2000). Variations in these gendered traits evolve from the infinite ways in which individuals make meaning of gender and, conversely, the variety of ways in which individuals can use gender to make meaning. No filmmaker better conveys this sense of gender fluidity and possibility than Almodóvar.

Nor is any filmmaker more accepting of the unconventional sexuality of his characters. The only character in *Talk to Her* for whom we have little empathy is the psychiatrist. Alicia's father is a man who does not protect his daughter on two occasions in the course of the film, because his authoritative certainty about narrowly defined gender categories prevents him from seeing what is happening in front of him. When Alicia's father walks into the hospital and sees Benigno massaging his daughter's naked thigh, he deals with his obvious discomfort by asking the nurse, "What is your sexual orientation?" Benigno answers, "I am oriented more toward men," and Alicia's father walks away, apparently reassured. Benigno is indignant at this question. Yet, even in the moment, we understand the absurdity of using this information, truthful or not, for reassurance. We immediately recognize that Benigno cannot be categorized so neatly—and, perhaps, neither can anyone else.

Marco and Benigno

As the film unfolds, we see the great difficulty all the characters have in making their love relationships work, whether due to internal limitations or external circumstances. Lydia dies, Alicia remains in a coma, and Benigno is imprisoned. As the film moves to its charged denouement, the two men turn to each other for help and comfort. For the first time, they allow themselves to participate in an open and mutually dependent relationship, despite the fact that one of them is behind bars (or perhaps because of this). Although Benigno and Marco's relationship is not sexually actualized, Benigno allows himself to express his love to a real person who can talk back, and Marco allows himself to respond openly to his friend's tenderness and need for him. Marco has changed, and we recognize that Benigno has been the catalyst for this transformation.

Looking back, we remember that Marco's change first began in the hospital as he became drawn into Benigno's world. While Benigno's advice to talk to the comatose Lydia seemed kooky at first, Marco recognizes that his reluctance to talk to her is a part of his problem—a problem of incapacity to invest in that relationship. (This is made patently clear when Lydia's boyfriend arrives and immediately takes her hand and begins to speak intimately to her.) As Marco spends more and more time with Benigno and Alicia, he comes to take for granted their relationship, just as the audience does. Benigno's interest in Alicia and his one-sided conversations with her make her a live person in the room. When Marco leaves, we notice that he enters Alicia's room to say goodbye to her even though she is alone. We have come to think of this as most natural and appropriate. Marco has become more like Benigno, and so have we.

When Marco rushes back to see his imprisoned friend, we have no doubt that he loves Benigno and suffers for him. His thwarted attempts to make phone contact with Benigno make Marco desperate. One of the most memorable scenes in the movie is that of Marco talking to Benigno in prison. They speak face to face for a

long time. This is unusual for the couples in this film. Each man holds up his hand, palm open, in an attempt to touch, as they press against the glass wall that separates them. It is as if they are trying to obliterate the barrier between them. As they talk, the reflections of each man in the glass make the two characters visually merge on screen. Nor do they shy away from the erotic. Benigno says to Marco, "I've been thinking about you. Especially at night . . ." And later in the conversation, he says, "They asked if you were my boyfriend. I dared not say yes, because it might bother you." Marco replies, "I don't mind."

The men's relationship also involves a psychological merger, as their overlapping reflections in the glass indicate. In many ways, Marco becomes Benigno. He lives in Benigno's old flat; he takes over Benigno's spot at the window and watches the dancers in the ballet school below. It is from this window that he spots Alicia and realizes that she has recovered from her coma. However, Marco keeps this a secret from his friend, even though he might have prevented Benigno's suicide had he been open with him. It seems that Marco has taken over Benigno's interest in Alicia as well.

THE END: THE METAPHOR OF THE BALLET

At the end of the film, Marco goes to a performance of *Masurca Fogo*, another Pina Bausch ballet. He meets Alicia at the ballet, and we know that he will try to attach himself to her. Alicia and Marco gaze responsively at each other across an empty seat; perhaps it represents the absent Benigno. Benigno is gone, but his love— weird and transgressive as it was—became the catalyst for change in both of them. He brought Alicia back to life by impregnating her. Marco was transformed by his internalization of Benigno's greater openness and receptivity. Benigno penetrated both of them. In Benigno's suicide note, he writes to Marco, "Wherever they take me, come and see me and talk to me. Tell me everything. Don't be so secretive." And Marco does.

We hope that Marco will now succeed in love where Benigno failed, where he himself failed in the past. There is a chance to start over. The ballet is more upbeat: there are couples dancing with each other. Their hips are swinging and their skirts are of brightly colored fabric. They are dancing face to face and moving in rhythm with each other. Interestingly, there is a woman who is passed around in a reclining position, who tries to speak but only sighs, a woman who cannot talk. Perhaps she is a nod to the past; perhaps she is a ghost that must be exorcised.

Despite the upbeat ending, *Talk to Her* is not an upbeat film. It is a film, however, that has the capacity to entertain, to move, and to disturb, all at the same time.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE ROAD TO UNITY IN PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY. By Leo Rangell. New York: Jason Aronson, 2007. 134 pp.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

—T. S. Eliot¹

It was thus that T. S. Eliot once reflected on the state of knowledge and knowing. Leo Rangell might well agree—or at least he might wish it were always so.

In his new book, *The Road to Unity in Psychoanalytic Theory*—part memoir, part historical review, and part apologia—Rangell takes us on a whirlwind tour of the history of psychoanalysis as seen through the eyes of one of its seminal contributors. His hypothesis is that psychoanalysis has lost its way in a forest of ideas, not so much because of external or internal (organizational) factors, but because of theoretical pluralism that fails to recognize and build from the trunk of the psychoanalytic tree—the Freudian theory of the mind. He argues that psychoanalysis, if it is to survive and be restored to its previously esteemed and inspirational position in the world, must distill and/or further develop a total, unitary theory. Without this, he warns, psychoanalysis could fragment into oblivion.

This short and engaging book begins with a reminiscence of the halcyon days when psychoanalytic candidates and faculty lingered after scientific meetings to discuss the nascent world of analytic theory and practice. For many years, there was—more or less—one theory, with many applications to and implications for practice.

¹ Eliot, T. S. (1942). Little Gidding (Four Quartets). In *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot, 1909-1950*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978, p. 145.

Over the course of time, however, other theories were advanced and took root. Rangell comments:

This theoretical multiplicity resulted, in my opinion, first in a spirited excitement, and then in a gradual disillusionment and demoralization, a gradual process that led to conflict, confusion, contradictions, and a fragmented whole. Both the coherence of the theory and the inspiration with which it came to be met and absorbed have been lost. I believe the two are related as cause and effect, that inspiration went the same route as a unified, coherent theory. [p. 4]

It is with this lament that Rangell introduces the subject of study of this book: the course of Freud's developing theory of mind. As he reflects in chapter 1: "In the hundred-year history of psychoanalysis, the new science and therapeutic discipline reached a peak, suffered a decline, and has settled down to have its permanent role objectively assessed" (p. 4). As our guide to this journey, Rangell beckons us into the forest to do just that, introducing himself "as a 'developed Freudian'—that is, one who has retained insights and formulations that to me have endured over time and have proven indispensable, and who has added such new ones as I feel have earned inclusion" (p. 8).

In the first third of the book, he lays the groundwork for his arguments by reviewing, in sequential chapters, the development of psychoanalysis, early theory, splits, the "Golden Era," the break-up of theory, and the ascent of pluralism. He traces "the longitudinal history of [psychoanalytic] theory in the same manner as is done with the analysis of an individual, studying its developmental course" (p. 9). In so doing, he proposes that Freud faced a series of developmental forks in the road, as with the controversy of fact versus fantasy in seduction theory.

A challenge was posed to the rigor both of his thinking and of his character. Was the answer to be found in fact or in imagination—or both? Or should he give the whole thing up and leave, as Breuer did? Freud, of course stayed and went on. But did he add unconscious fantasy to his earlier

discovery of seduction trauma—or did he replace the old by the new? [p. 13]

Here Rangell, unlike most students of psychoanalytic history, concludes that Freud, “after a momentary period of ambiguity and wonder, . . . went on to recognize a rational coexistence—that both [actual seduction and fantasy] applied and were in fact reciprocal, each influencing the other” (p. 13). He argues that Freud set a precedent for not automatically ablating the old and replacing it with the new. Rather, “a new fact does not automatically wipe out an older one; both need to be assessed by objective criteria” (p. 13). Unfortunately, Rangell complains, this nodal point in psychoanalysis has also represented a precedent for subsequent generations in attempting to replace the old with the new.

Much of the middle third of the book is devoted to documenting this, both theoretically and organizationally. In both arenas, the author expresses his concern that it is not reason but affect that has led to splits in and the abandonment of the trunk of the tree of psychoanalysis. Accordingly, in chapters 9 through 13, he guides us through the origins of the so-called Bad American (The American Psychoanalytic Association), the problem of lay analysis, the problem of medical analysis, the problems of/with the science of psychoanalysis, and the breakup of technique. In discussing this last topic, he documents the changing patterns of the theory of technique, highlighting self-disclosure, enactment, intersubjectivity, and the rational ego. He concludes:

I have lived and worked with general satisfaction under Fenichel’s dictum, “The subject matter, not the method, of psychoanalysis is irrational.” My life applying the theory of psychoanalysis to the varied experiences of psychoanalytic clinician has given me no reason to abandon this guideline. I have found the multipronged theory of psychoanalysis applicable across the board, ready to be applied to the infinite situations we are privileged to confront in our daily work. Irrationalities do not worry or deflect us; they are what we seek and welcome, as subjects of our study. [p. 83]

These thoughts serve as a springboard to the real heart of this book, Rangell's plea for a unitary theory:

There is in fact an alternative to alternative theories, and it has maintained its identity throughout this era of undulating changes. In the ongoing debate over "one theory," I favor one total composite psychoanalytic theory, unified and cumulative: total because it contains all nonexpendable elements, composite because it is a blend of the old and all valid new concepts and discoveries, and psychoanalytic as fulfilling the criteria for what is psychoanalysis. Throughout the various phases of changing theories during the last thirty years, I have favored one integrated unitary theory, containing all new advances that are generally considered valid, while retaining all previous discoveries that are not expendable and have endured. My unitary theory of anxiety is an earlier example of such integration, composed of a fusion of both of Freud's theories of anxiety [actual neurosis and signal anxiety]. [p. 85]

For example, Rangell argues, the study of narcissism should not lead to a divergence from the trunk of the psychoanalytic tree:

In its normal or pathological configurations, variations in narcissism fit into and are to be explained by the same total theoretical tree of drives, defenses, affects, compromise formations, symptom formation, and character traits What is not included in total theory are idiosyncratic constructions that have served to separate split-off advocacy groups that are either not new or are not a significant addition. The self-object, for example, is already in main theory under different guises. Infancy of Kleinian theory is included, but not the concrete fantasies attributed by Kleinians to that early age. A two-person psychology is not part of composite theory in a symmetrical form. Tragic man can be included, but now without guilty man, nor empathy at the expense of neutrality, nor attachment without also the separation-individuation process. [p. 89]

So, who decides what's in and what's out of the main trunk? Rangell answers this succinctly: "The answer is the same in all: the

collective consensus for the generally held theoretical system, each analyst for his individual preferences" (p. 91). And therein lies the rub.

Before elaborating on this, though, it is important to note, as Rangell does in chapter 16, his additions to total theory. He includes among these "the terrain of psychoanalysis and dynamic psychotherapy, similarities and differences, the separations and the overlaps" (p. 109), "unconscious choice and decision making" (p. 109) as an ego function, the elaboration of Freud's unconscious signal process (Rangell's "human core") and the centrality of castration anxiety in this (p. 112), and numerous writings arguing in favor of a unification of psychoanalytic theory (pp. 112-113). Without question, Rangell's voice has been clear and powerful over the many decades of his illustrious career.

The problem with this book does not lie with its author or with his wish for a unity of theory. It is a grand wish and I happen to share it, but the problem is that not everybody does. Psychoanalysis has left the Forest of Eden. Not only has the trunk of the psychoanalytic tree bifurcated many times since the time of Freud—it was bifurcating even during his time. I would argue that, with many of his discoveries, it was Freud himself who was instrumental in the bifurcation process. This was true, for example, in regard to his seduction theory. Contrary to Rangell's description, Freud did not "recognize a rational coexistence" (p. 13) between the old and the new; he led the charge in promoting the new theory and in insisting that the old theory be abandoned.

That methodology was and is the nature of new theory formation. It also happens to reflect human nature. While we can wish for new theorists to respect and build on established theory, thus promoting an Eriksonian-like epigenesis, this usually does not happen. It has not happened in most scientific fields, and it has certainly not happened in psychoanalysis.

That said, I like *The Road to Unity in Psychoanalytic Theory* and heartily recommend it. It is the next best thing to a fireside chat with greatness.

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WALKING HEADS: ON THE SECRET FANTASY OF BEING AN EXCEPTION. By Antonie Ladan. Translated from the Dutch by Marjolijn de Jager. New York: Other Press, 2005. 146 pp.

This is a wonderful little book. It is clear, cogent, and full of clinical wisdom. It focuses upon a major defensive stratagem employed by certain remarkable people to contend with an extremely difficult childhood from which they cannot escape. They suppress awareness of their emotional needs and desires, which are not being fulfilled, and they resort to a powerful fantasy that they are not helpless children, but already are the highly capable and competent adults they expect to be in the future but need to be in the present. They give up their ability to be children, split themselves off from their shameful, uncontrollable bodily urges and impulses, and become seemingly proficient pseudo-adults. At times, they also assume the role of caretaker of their siblings and even of their floundering parents.

These individuals grow up into outwardly content, autonomous, independent adults who, to a greater or lesser extent, maintain a self-protective aloofness from close, intense relationships with others. The loneliness that ensues is compensated for by a secret fantasy of being an exceptionally important, powerful, deeply loved and admired, even heroic personage. They are each, to a significant extent, all head and no body—hence the title of the book—and each is an adult without ever having been a child, impressively competent and efficient. They have no conscious awareness that their efficiency and independence serve an important defensive function.

Ladan provides interesting clinical material to illustrate the thesis that these people live out a life scenario that is anchored in implicit rather than explicit memory. Its self-protective nature has to be deciphered in the course of treatment from its expression in action, long before it emerges as isolated bits of explicit memory and revelatory, verbal glimpses of carefully guarded secrets.

For example, he describes his work with a woman who spent three years, beginning when she was two, in a Japanese internment

camp in Indonesia. She was there together with her mother while her father was interned elsewhere. She was reunited with her father at the age of five, shortly after which her mother died of an illness contracted in the camp. Persistent distrust of her analyst and an ongoing determination to end her sessions before her analyst could “abruptly” end them eventually led to an important discovery. The patient, who behaved as though no man could be trusted, regardless of how decent he seemed to be, had been warned repeatedly while in the camp that the Japanese guards were dangerous and were not to be trusted, no matter how friendly or kindly they acted. Her father, furthermore, had failed in his responsibility to stay with and protect her and her mother. Three years after the war ended, her father remarried, to a woman with whom the patient got along well until two other children were born.

In the third year of the analysis, the patient appeared to become more trustful of her analyst, began to be aware of missing him during their weekend separations, and began to imagine that he would throw his arms around her, hug and kiss her, and never let her go. “It became clear,” Ladan states, “that [they] were mother and child in this fantasy of hers” (p. 41). This led to the emergence of another fantasy, in which her analyst would lie on top of her, insert his penis into her, and remain perfectly still, “inextricably linked” to her “forever” (p. 41). She revealed that she had harbored a secret fantasy that, although her mother had died, she nevertheless remained alive and always with her, so long as the patient were willing “to wait and be a good girl and never go off with strange men” (p. 41).

The reader wonders, of course, if there might not have been an additional, guilt-ridden, secret, oedipal fantasy that she had eliminated her mother so that she could take her place with her father. Indeed, a few pages later, we learn that allusions to this dimension of her secret fantasy life did eventually surface.

The people to whom Ladan calls attention harbor a secret fantasy of being an exceptional human being of lofty status, an idea that serves multiple purposes. One is that it wards off painful

awareness of having been unloved by parents and at times by siblings. It also serves to push away the feeling of being bad, monstrous, ugly, and unworthy of being loved. It disavows, furthermore, that they are extremely needy. They can feel admired and wanted only if they maintain the fiction that they do not need anyone and are innocent of vengeful fury at those who fail them. They hide their guilty conviction that they do not deserve to live behind the secret belief that time stands still, so that they will never change and will never die. Dread of powerlessness requires that they hide their terror of aging and eventually ceasing to exist.

Ladan's thesis is epitomized in his observation that:

In the . . . state of pseudo-adulthood that the child has assumed there is no question of yearning anymore. There is no "later, when I am big, it will be this way or that." It is rather "I am big and everything is the way it is supposed to be". . . . Instead of the helpless and lonely child who knows himself to be unloved and is full of unfilled longings, there now is the adult who has everything under control, has no yearnings, and who is independent. Everything is perfect, everything is the way it should be, and everything has always been that way. The past, the ghastly past, no longer exists, and actually has never existed. The same holds true for the future It will always be the way it is now. [p. 92]

In addition to providing illustrative examples drawn from his clinical experience, Ladan turns to fictional characters to assist him in elaborating his thesis. In a brief citation from Roald Dahl's novel *Matilda*,¹ he quotes Miss Trunchbull, the school principal, as she objects to her first graders acting like children:

"But surely *you* were a small person once, Miss Trunchbull, weren't you?"

"I was *never* a small person," she snapped. "I have been large all my life and I don't see why others can't be the same way."

¹ Dahl, R. (1988). *Matilda*. London: Jonathan Cape.

"But you must have started out as a baby," the boy said.

"*Me!* A baby!" shouted the Trunchbull. "How dare you suggest such a thing! What cheek! What infernal insolence!" [Ladan, p. 151]

Surprisingly, Ladan omits mentioning that Miss Trunchbull is a sadistic monster who abuses children, or that Matilda's parents are self-centered, obnoxious, boorish people who neglect and exploit their child and are willing to send her away for money.

The author focuses at length on the flight into fantasy of Bastian Balthazar Bux, the fat, unpopular, teased, and tormented little boy in Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*,² who has lost his mother to illness and death, is failing at school, and is neglected by his depressed, withdrawn father. He flees from his unbearable childhood into the magical world of Fantastica, in which he becomes a slim, noble, handsome prince who acquits himself impressively in a series of dashing exploits that eventuate in his rescuing "the Childlike Empress" from wasting away from a mysterious illness that threatens her life. Bastian creates a better mother for himself, one who does not die but allows herself to be saved by him, and in gratitude gives him a golden amulet, which confirms that she is always with him and that all his wishes will be fulfilled (p. 75).

After he has gloriously won a tournament, to the loud acclaim of a throng of onlookers, a friend comments to Bastian how different he looks from the way he was before his entry into the fantasy world of the book. Bastian is dumbfounded by what he has been told. He "laughs and says that he has always been the way he is now. Else he would remember, wouldn't he!" (p. 76). He is chastened in his effort to become the all-powerful emperor of Fantastica and learns that he can have a future only if he gives up his wish to forget his painful past, which Ladan likens to what occurs in a successful analytic treatment. Bastian sobbingly allows himself to undergo a mourning process that finally permits him to become capable of truly loving and being loved.

² Ende, M. (1983). *The Neverending Story*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Ladan also draws upon Oscar Wilde's masterpiece *The Picture of Dorian Gray*³ as a companion story to that of one of his patients, who stopped time in order to support his secret fantasy that he always had been and always would be in his prime as a perfect, powerful, loved, and admired adult, who had never been a weak and helpless child and never would become a frail and failing old man. This patient needed to be helped to gradually and painfully give up his defensive fantasy of being an exception to the inevitability of aging and decaying.

Wilde's creation, Dorian, similarly could not bear to experience the despair that would come from undergoing that process. For Dorian, who lacked the opportunity to undergo analysis, suicide was the only course he could find

. . . to deliver him from the soft weeping of the lonely child that waits in vain in the nursery for the consoling parent. For he who creates the illusion of frozen time for himself and always stays young, never grows old to become a parent, not even of his internal child. [p. 96]

An extremely interesting aspect of *Walking Heads* is the author's explication of the treatment issues involved in working with this group of analysands. He emphasizes that the analyst needs to be patient, empathic, and above all else unhurriedly respectful of the patient's need to vigorously guard and protect the defensive system that distances him or her from the truth about the past. It is via the experience of a series of "transference fantasies" (p. 107), in which the patient experiences, within the analytic setting, feelings of desperate loneliness, utter despair, and emotional distance from others as well as from the self, that she or he gradually becomes aware of and then able to confront the painful memories of what actually did take place when she or he was little.

The final two chapters of the book apply not only to the category of patients described within its pages, but also to psychoana-

³ Wilde, O. (1891). *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In *The Complete Illustrated Stories, Plays and Poems of Oscar Wilde*. London: Chancellor, 1991.

lytic technique in general. Ladan tersely and movingly describes the principles of sensitive attunement, attention both to the patient's needs and sensibilities and to the analyst's human frailties and countertransference tendencies, patience, tact, and the effort to avoid distortions of clinical judgment created by excessive allegiance to one or another theoretical framework—all of which pertain to good psychoanalytic work in general. These two chapters will be extremely rewarding, both to psychoanalysts who are new to the field and to those who are well along in it.

The book derives from a series of papers that were presented or published over the years. This has contributed to a bit of repetition within it, which detracts somewhat from the overall effect, but this is a minor matter. I warmly recommend this slim volume as a marvelously rewarding, clinical treasure.

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THE WORK OF PSYCHIC FIGURABILITY: MENTAL STATES WITHOUT REPRESENTATION. By César Botella and Sara Botella. Hove, England/New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2005. 212 pp.

This is a very important book for psychoanalysts, one that is well worth the effort of reading, although it will prove challenging and at times difficult for English-language readers in general, and perhaps for some American readers in particular. The central challenge is one that we continually face with most, if not all, our patients, and have faced since Freud: how to find words with which to describe the ineffable, the ineluctable, the not yet articulated or even pictorially represented; the unconscious as impulse, movement, potential before it is limited in possible meaning and “tamed” by being joined to words: the very substrate of raw, unprocessed—and unprocessable—experience that will come to constitute an important part of the unconscious and from which consciousness and the agencies that make up the mental apparatus will emerge.

Cogently and convincingly, the Botellas argue that this challenge is at the heart of contemporary psychoanalysis as theory and practice, for it is also at the heart of each individual's psychic functioning—a view shared, for the most part, by Wilfred Bion¹ (the transformation from beta to alpha), André Green² (*le négatif*), Peter Fonagy³ (mentalization), and Donnel Stern⁴ (unformulated experience), to give a few examples, as well as by other analysts in the French literature who may be largely unfamiliar to American readers, but whose work will be encountered in the course of reading this book.

In the Botellas' view, which they support with a careful, interesting, and at times almost radical reading of Freud, the analysis of borderline cases forces us to recognize the necessity of transcending "our habitual working models, originating, notably, in the interpretation of the dream narrative of [Freud's] first topography And its modes of explication of causal relations limited to relations between representations or systems of representations" (p. 177).

What is needed, instead, is a model of psychic reality in which "the issue is no longer [only] one of a conflict inscribed, repressed, of something 'already there' waiting to be revealed" (p. 179). Thus, the Botellas argue that, along with our more usual formulations, *analysts must conceptualize and create a language with which to include and describe mental states that either cannot achieve or have not yet achieved representation*. This second model is one that they describe as *processual*—choosing this word explicitly, in part, because it connotes forces that are always in the *process* of becoming, "a potential effect without content" (p. 116, italics in original).

This distinction leads the authors to emphasize a conceptualization of mental functioning that "take[s] into consideration two levels of psychic reality whose relations with material reality are quite different [The first is] the predominantly representational psychic reality, that of the systems, which Freud described so well"

¹ Bion, W. R. (1962). *Learning From Experience*. London: Heinemann.

² Green, A. (2002). *The Work of the Negative*. London: Free Association Books.

³ Fonagy, P., Gergely, G., Jurist, E. & Target, M. (2002). *Affect Regulation, Mentalization, and the Development of the Self*. New York: Other Press.

⁴ Stern, D. (1997). *Unformulated Experience*. Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press.

(p. 180). This is the familiar domain of symptom formation, symbolization, displacement, condensation, conflict, defense, parapraxis, dream interpretation, transference and countertransference, and so forth, with which analysts, especially those who have been trained in the classical American tradition, are most conversant. Each of these phenomena is connected to the preconscious, structured by language (word-presentations), and embedded in a network of temperospatial causality. In this domain, Freud's metaphor of the analyst as archeologist, reconstructing the past from shards and pieces of surviving memories, is a powerful and instructive example of clinical functioning.

In contrast, and in important adumbration to this theory, the Botellas describe a second, more elusive layer of the mind, which they describe as always being in a potential state, a state of becoming. This is a

. . . predominantly *processual* psychic reality [i.e., a realm of processes and potential meanings rather than contents with fixed meanings; a realm where contents have not yet been linked to forces], marked by hallucinatory and perceptual activity, . . . deploying itself towards . . . the quest for the lost object of hallucinatory satisfaction. [p. 180, italics added]

Within this "processual" domain, "*there is a total absence of intelligibility and . . . content*" (p. 116, italics in original). "Everything . . . is causational potentiality, power capable of creating meaning, causality . . . in a state of becoming" (p. 180).

From the perspective of the processual, the psychic agencies (id, ego, and superego) are continually evolving, in flux, in the act of being constituted. This domain is related to Freud's⁵ (1896) view of memory as serially reworked in retranscription after retranscription (*nachträglichkeit*), and to his suggestion at the end of the screen memory paper⁶ that we may have only memories *relating to*

⁵ Freud, S. (1896). Letter 52 (6 December 1896), in *Extracts From the Fliess Papers*. *S. E.*, 1.

⁶ Freud, S. (1899). Screen memories. *S. E.*, 3.

our childhood, rather than memories *of* our childhood. This also fits with the concept of *construction* rather than reconstruction, and with the view of psychic *work*—as in “dreamwork,” or the demand for work made upon the psychic apparatus by the drives—rather than a view that emphasizes psychic *content*. It is a view of psychic functioning that is deeply and inexorably linked to “absence [‘the negative’], trauma and the emergence of intelligibility” (p. xiv).

It is also a view of a layer of crucial psychic functioning that tends to lay hidden beneath the more usual elements and experiences of the mind. It has been hidden because of its roots in traumatic situations—the failure to represent reflects the initial overwhelming of the mental capacities of the self and its caretakers to bind and withstand the elementary, raw experience that produces the experience to begin with—and because the threat of approaching that which is unrepresented, or of, once again, losing one’s representational capacity, holds the potential of being overwhelmingly traumatic in and of itself.

The clinical challenge at this processual level of psychic functioning follows from the fact that “what is irrepresentable cannot be psychically apprehended by the same processes that allow representations to be understood” (p. xviii). Thus, successful clinical functioning will require that the analyst act as the “double” to this unrepresented area of the patient’s mind by undergoing a temporary regression, marked by an actual or threatened rupture of his or her own representational world. This regression, which mirrors the beleaguered position of the patient, may give rise to spontaneous, irruptive, and/or uncanny experiences that can range from the humorous to the inspired, from the chaotic to the terrifying, and may encompass greater or lesser degrees of depersonalization or derealization, as the analyst, resonating in intersubjective concordance with the patient, attempts to use his or her unconscious to

. . . register a perception of the void and bring it into the realm of the representable . . . It is important that this . . . [process] “originates in community with the patient’s psychic functioning”. . . [so that] when the understanding in

terms of representation can finally be reached, it has a sense of meaning and conviction for the patient. [p. xx]

Ultimately, what the Botellas are proposing is a complex theory of the mind—and of two minds in intersubjective communion—in which phenomena determined by the two domains, that of the represented and that of the unrepresented, coexist and intersect, giving rise to a perspective in which “ego, id, and superego are thus conceived both as agencies and processes being constantly [and perpetually] reconstituted” (p. 179).

In defense of this almost radical revision of the traditional psychoanalytic view of mental functioning, the Botellas ally themselves first and foremost with the *spirit* of Freud’s inquiry, which, they contend, reflects not just particular discoveries and formulations, but “a revolutionary mode of thought” (p. xiii) that transcends and is independent of the specifics of Freud’s discoveries and the culture and scientific zeitgeist of the epoch in which those discoveries were made. They argue instead for a psychoanalysis that boldly and continually presses toward new findings and formulations, even at the expense of disrupting the comfort of the established status quo.

In accordance with this view and in support of their argument, they offer a careful, sophisticated, sometimes provocative reading of Freud that emerges from his attempts to understand the nature of consciousness and formulate a psychoanalytic metapsychology of cognition: perception, hallucination, and representation. They trace the developments of this thinking from Freud’s earliest writings—the Project (1887–1902), the Dreambook (1900)—and through the metapsychology papers to *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), where the unrepresentable becomes linked to Freud’s formulations about trauma, and on to a dramatic breakthrough in the 1937 paper, “Constructions in Analysis.” There, the authors contend, Freud once again transcended the limits of his previous formulations when he asserted that conviction could take the place of recall of forgotten memory in the dynamics of the analytic cure.

All of this makes for a challenging read, but one that is well worth the effort, as readers will be rewarded with a vital, even brilliant account of mental functioning in the individual and within

the analytic pair at the point of construction and representation of mental contents. Although the authors might insist on their differences, to this reader, deeply immersed in the thought of Bion,⁷ their book reads like an intimate taxonomy of the workings of the Bionian concepts of *waking dream thoughts* and alpha function in the individual mind and in the dyad, a metapsychology of reverie and a powerful elaboration, theoretical exposition, and illustration of container/contained. It also offers insights into the psychology of creativity in general and a provocative vision of some of the previously undeveloped implications in Freud's creative thinking in particular.

To the benefit of the reader, the Botellas are also astute clinicians, and their book is illustrated with clinical vignettes and case examples from adult and child analyses. While they may reason at a metapsychological level of complex theoretical and philosophical abstraction, they repeatedly return to the clinical moment to illustrate their main thesis: that *a theory of psychoanalysis and mental functioning that assumes the capacity for representation and the presence of an intact, symbolizing ego is insufficient to account for the clinical phenomena and therapeutic exigencies encountered in an ordinary psychoanalytic practice*.

What they insist is needed, instead, is a theory capable of addressing and accounting for what Michael Parsons, in his very helpful introduction to the English-language edition, describes as "that aspect of experience which will not 'go into words' because it will not, so to speak, 'go into thought' in the first place" (p. xvii). Put another way, the Botellas attempt to create language and theory to describe the action of converting proto-elements of thought and feeling into something that is mentalizable and potentially articulatable and representable. For at the heart of their argument are the assertions that:

1. Psychopathology, at least that psychopathology that is the most difficult to deal with, involves the vicissitudes of

⁷ See, for example: Bion, W. R. (1970). *Attention and Interpretation*. New York: Basic Books.

disturbing mental states that threaten to lose mental representation or have not yet achieved it.

2. The analytic process makes use of powerful remedial forces that are deeply and inherently rooted in the potential creation of—rather than in simply the uncovering of—mind and meaning.

In development and in psychoanalysis, the processes by which these unrepresented states achieve mental representation are often dyadic, pair specific, and intersubjectively determined. To name these complex processes, the Botellas have chosen the neologism *figurability*. The rationale for having chosen a new word—and this word in particular—is discussed in a very interesting and carefully reasoned way, both in the authors' introduction to the English edition and in Chapter 5, "Figurability and the Work of Figurability."

For the analyst in the clinical situation, assisting the patient in achieving representation of heretofore unrepresented mental states (i.e., helping the patient do the "work of figurability") requires undergoing a spontaneous *formal regression* within the hour, so as to capture the essence of that which has not yet been nominated, articulated, or represented by the patient. The Botellas have chosen the term *formal* to indicate that this is a regression—analogue to that which Freud described as occurring in night dreams—that entails "a change in quality, a change in the *form* of psychic elements—the model being the transformation of ideas into a hallucinatory dream image" (p. 121, italics added).

The work of figurability requires that the analyst function, as noted earlier, as a "double" to the patient and undergo a kind of processual trial identification with the unrepresented part or quality of the patient's experience, or a concordant formal regression toward his or her own areas of unrepresented experience. This regression forces the analyst to undergo a threatened or actual momentary loss of representation in his or her own psyche, with all of the dislocation, turbulence, and rupture that this experience may imply.

It is in experiencing this threatened or actual disinvestment of representations, and in reviving the self from it, that the analyst comes to “know” what the patient is facing, not in terms of specific content, because this is an area of mind that exists beyond and before content is possible, but in force, feeling, and the dislocating effects of threatened or actual dedifferentiation. In undergoing and taming this experience within his or her self by giving at least internal voice to it, or letting it generate a unique and newly created, nameable derivative, and then using the personal experience of having done so as the basis for his or her interventions, the analyst may

. . . register a perception of the void and bring it back into the realm of the representable . . . [and] may then be able to find a way of articulating it to the patient as a representation that can be made use of. [p. vxiii]

To quote Michael Parsons again:

The analyst, by opening his or her own psyche to a regressive movement, from verbal articulation and object-representation towards non-verbal experience and a quasi-hallucinatory kind of perception, reflects the predicament of the patient’s psyche. Because this is inevitably disturbing and “uncanny” for the analyst, there is a constant temptation to escape from the mirroring between analyst and patient by converting the “working as a double” into some other more reassuringly familiar and transferentially manageable mode of analytic relating. [p. xxi]

The kind of transformative interaction that the Botellas are trying to convey is not the usual one of interpretive activity. It seems far more intuitive or inspired. In accomplishing the work of figurability,

. . . the analyst does not associate ideas, time, objects; he does not interpret strictly speaking, does not reveal a repressed idea, already there, which is his usual work, but he creates/finds (in Winnicott’s sense) on the spot, that which, in the analysand, should have been represented but

has not been. He gives intelligibility to a trace that is irrepresentable, “untranslatable” into word-presentations.” [p. 43]

This work is complex, akin to dreaming or hallucination and accessible only via a state of regression. As explained in the translator’s note and carefully argued throughout the book, it is

. . . a sort of intuitive, visionary work of the imagination resulting in a “flash,” a visual representation . . . that will make it possible for the analysand to form a representation of that which had formerly remained irrepresentable, because of its traumatic origins. [p. xv]

In this sense, the phenomenology of the work of figurability is reminiscent of Ferro’s description,⁸ following Bion, of pictograms or flashes of images that may reflect and accompany the analyst’s successful transformations of the patient’s projected beta elements into the building blocks of thought.

For the practicing analyst, however, this theory of mental functioning presents a very vital and vexing technical question. Given that the analyst faces the ever-present danger of “overinterpreting” the familiar, of too quickly addressing the more usual layers of represented and meaning-laden phenomena to avoid facing the void, how do we determine, moment to moment within the session, when we may “analyze as usual,” as opposed to when we should wait for the inspired moment of formal regression that will unconsciously and spontaneously allow us to perform “the work of figurability”?

Surely, the answer will depend in large part on the assessment of whether or to what extent the treatment is progressing or getting bogged down. But this assessment is often uncertain, prone to shift from moment to moment, a matter of interpretation. And if the formal regressions that give birth to the work of figurability occur spontaneously, like a night dream, how are we to specify the conditions that foster these rare but precious occurrences?

⁸ Ferro, A. (2002). *In The Analyst’s Consulting Room*. Hove, England/New York: Brunner-Routledge.

These are not easy questions to answer, and I suspect that they are ones that will continue to occupy psychoanalysts for many, many years to come. To their credit, however, the Botellas have articulated the dilemmas quite clearly and in a way that compels us to confront these matters head on. To have done so constitutes a major contribution and advance in our thinking, and for this we remain deeply in their debt.

HOWARD B. LEVINE (BROOKLINE, MA)

MICHELANGELO'S MOSES UND FREUD'S "WAGSTÜCK." By Ilse Grubrich-Simitis. Frankfurt, Germany: S. Fischer Verlag, 2004. 132 pp.

Grubrich-Simitis has created a collage in which she examines Freud's relationship to the statue of Moses, part of the monumental tomb of Pope Julius II by Michelangelo. The collage, as she calls it, consists of bringing together her intimate knowledge of Freud's entire life and work, including the following: his struggles at the time of publication of this study in 1914¹; the history of psychoanalysis and the history of the publication itself; the fate of the statue in relationship to the whole of which it forms a part—the papal tomb; Michelangelo, its creator; the pope who commissioned the statue; the man Moses; and the artistic conventions identified by art historians that played a part in its original meaning. Together, these separate parts, made more vivid by illustrations, constitute a fascinating whole, assembled by the author with an eye toward mystery.

In fact, the story begins with a mystery: Freud—atypically, according to the author—started his 1914 essay with the word "I," but published it anonymously. He referred to it as "daring" (*Wagstück*), raising a question about the conflicts that motivated such a contradictory approach. He had seen the statue that was its subject for the first time in 1901, at the time of the breakup of his friendship with Fliess, and the essay was published after his breakup with

¹ Freud, S. (1914). The Moses of Michelangelo. *S. E.*, 13.

Jung. Freud was ambivalent and doubtful about the validity of his own reactions as expressed in the essay, partly because he concentrated on the external attributes of the work itself rather than on his own emotions. He criticized the essay as the work of a dilettante, but held on to his urge to publish it without any references to infantile sexuality.

Freud maintained that the statue represents the moment when Moses comes down from Mount Sinai; it is the moment before he smashes the tablets containing the Ten Commandments. However, through Grubrich-Simitis's meticulous research into art history, some doubt is shed on this interpretation. Art historians know that the statue was not in the position originally assigned to it at the time of Freud's visit. The change of position was significant in that it allowed Freud to maintain the statue's lack of connection to mortality; for the statue attained prominence not only in comparison to the mediocrity of the remaining sepulchral edifice, but also by virtue of having been moved forward and placed on a higher pedestal in 1816, thereby losing its integration with the tomb. Without knowing this history, Freud was sensitive to the statue's "coarse incoherence," which seemed inconceivable and not in line with the genius of Michelangelo. But those considerations did not influence Freud's interpretation, to which he held until the end of his life.

Freud hoped that a careful study of the statue's physical attributes would reveal its meaning. Atypically, he conducted an analysis of the form. His analysis of the movements of the hands led him to conclude that the statue represents the calm after the storm and after the tablets have been secured by the right arm. In this way, Moses emerges as a man who has mastered his passion in the interest of a goal to which he has devoted his existence. Here, then, is Freud's idealization of a man who places his cause above the passions aroused by those who turned their back on it. The actual self-control of the participants in this drama—Pope Julius II, Moses, Michelangelo, and Freud—fell short of this ideal.

Grubrich-Simitis links Freud's reaction to early separation trauma, and poses the following questions.

Is it conceivable that such catastrophically excessive demands for precocious separation and the related triggering of recurrent separation panic attacks throughout his life are the precondition for the later advent of the most intensive aesthetic readiness to react? And is the blissful elation at the perception of great works of art not always mixed with a trace of heavenly, even if illusory, happiness of refinding the redeeming soothing and consolation, and of the feeling of being reassembled after chaotic mental fragmentation?² [p. 49]

In this respect, Grubrich-Simitis suggests that Freud found a maternal function in the sitting figure. She also suggests that Michelangelo's homosexuality may have had a determining role in Freud's reaction. Through her meticulous search of the literature (which can only be briefly included in this review), Grubrich-Simitis was able to point out some of Freud's errors. A major inaccuracy was caused by his belief that the statue depicts the first descent from Mount Sinai (as mentioned earlier in this review), whereas experts now take it to portray Moses after the second encounter with God. Other mistakes were caused by Freud's lack of acquaintance with the established iconography used by Michelangelo. For example, gestures such as the hand in the beard, to which Freud attributed emotional meaning, were based on established artistic conventions of the time. In this case, the gesture symbolized reverence in the face of the divine.

With the acceptance of the statue as portraying Moses's second descent, the emotional meaning of the work shifts from the confrontation with the Israelites to Moses having learned that his death is imminent, and that it will not be his fate to enter the promised land. Seeing it in this light, Grubrich-Simitis agrees with Verspohl, who pointed out that "beyond the story, the artist wanted to mirror equally the triumph and defeat of the biblical figure in the contradiction between forceful, unruffled presence and the helplessly resigned loosening in one and the same body" (quoted by Grubrich-Simitis on p. 76).

² This translation from the original German is my own.

This interpretation based on mortality serves to integrate the statue into the tomb of which it is a part and confirms the emotions depicted on the face. But despite the many similarities between Freud and Moses toward the end of their lives, which Grubrich-Simitis discusses, Freud's article stems from a time when Freud was considerably younger, with many creative years ahead of him. The theme of death and limitation escaped Freud's awareness (except as part of his preoccupation with succession). The seemingly inconsequential change in position from the original—that is, the statue's movement forward, which caused it to gain in vigor and lose its "entombment" in the tight space into which it had been originally placed—supported Freud's need for optimism. These points are graphically illustrated in the book, including an etching that shows the tomb as it appeared after its completion.

Grubrich-Simitis stresses that the themes of transience, ultimate separation, dying, and death are increasingly taboo in Western culture. However, the issue of succession was on Freud's conscious mind, as well as the implications of his own death as the father of psychoanalysis. Despite these thoughts, Freud clung to his interpretation of the calm and the mastery; he continued to be preoccupied by his essay, and wrote an appendix to it after Jones drew his attention to a Moses statue dating from the twelfth century that showed a similar position of the hands—suggesting that both followed an established iconography, rather than a gesture that was part of a specific movement. As Grubrich-Simitis points out, iconography does not preclude additional personal meaning, but there is considerable evidence that puts Freud's interpretation in doubt.

Grubrich-Simitis closes her study by suggesting that Freud did not allude to his 1914 study at the time he wrote *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) because of his need to cling to his interpretation of Michelangelo's Moses, in which aggression can be contained and surmounted. At the time when his life and the existence of everything that gave meaning to it were threatened with annihilation, Freud, according to this supposition, may have been fantasizing about mastery of the wish to destroy. The present renewed inter-

est in Moses prompts Grubrich-Simitis to conclude that Freud's vision may also correspond to a wish in the present time for greater mastery and lawfulness.

Anyone with a knowledge of German is urged to read Grubrich-Simitis's original text, with its many references and pictorial reproductions, to which this short summary cannot do justice.

MARION M. OLINER (NEW YORK)

TRUE PRETENSES: PSYCHODYNAMIC WORK WITH THE LOST, THE ANGRY, AND THE DEPRESSED. By Barrie M. Biven. Leicester, United Kingdom: Matador Press, 2005. 306 pp.

This book is written by a psychoanalyst and clinical psychologist who has emerged from the tradition of Anna Freud. He has dedicated his clinical life to the psychoanalytic treatment of individuals whom most analysts avoid, considering them inaccessible to psychoanalytic therapy—i.e., those with histories of severe impulse-control problems, neglect, and trauma.

Biven has become a valued consultant to a number of programs both in and beyond the United Kingdom, including in the United States, South Africa, and Mexico. This book is a very personal account by a gifted therapist of his life's work. The introduction/acknowledgment section clearly outlines his agenda, where he notes that he draws from a number of papers that he has published over the years, as well as from inspirational conversations he has had with analysts and others of great importance to him personally.

Biven's background, besides supervision and training under Anna Freud, includes military experience that brought him into raw contact with aggression. He served in the Royal Marines, commando division, an elite special force that brought him into contact with killing and the impact of the direct expression of aggression on the individual. He has taken this unique training and experience into the consulting room, where he works with children and adults who have committed violent crimes. In some ways, he

represents a perfect melding of healer, analyst, compassionate individual, and warrior—one who can direct aggression in a non-sadistic, nonphysical way and understand the impact of killing on both psychological and physical levels.

The central theme embodied in the title *True Pretenses* is that severely violent individuals have often experienced childhood trauma and conflict that prevents them from being aware of the influence of such experiences on their behavior. Thus, they tend to position themselves as fully in control of their own actions, rarely seeing the long-term consequences of their behavior, and are not capable of accepting responsibility for problems that result from it—for example, conflicts in marriage, in work relationships, and in long-term friendships.

One is reminded of Fonagy's idea of mentalization as one reads of Biven's cases. Very few of the patients described in this book are aware of the impact of their behavior on others or on themselves. That is, they dissociate, repress, and deny the implications of what they say and do—or, as Fonagy would say, they fail to mentalize.¹

In my work with violent individuals, I have become aware that such persons are often not alert to the impact on others of the way they look or of what they say. That is, it is not uncommon for an individual with a history of violence to say, "I have no idea why that person is so scared of me—I was not meaning to threaten them." Their incapacity to accurately estimate aggression results from what is called in behavioral psychology a *fundamental attribution error*, and is seen psychoanalytically to result from a mental state in which the violent individual sees reality as threatening, and thus reacts in the fight/flight mode. This mode does not encourage mentalization or abstract thought, and often results in serious under- or over-estimation of violence.

Biven positions himself as quite classical psychoanalytically. His way of conceptualizing what he does follows the tradition of Anna

¹ See: Fonagy, P., Gergely, G., Jurist, E. & Target, M. (2002). *Affect Regulation, Mentalization, and the Development of the Self*. New York: Other Press.

Freud, Sigmund Freud, and ego psychology. Obviously, he is capable of quickly developing a solid and caring therapeutic alliance with these impulse-ridden patients—a capability that no doubt grew out of his childhood experiences, including an ambivalent upbringing by a practical, purposeful, and commonsense father and a schizophrenic mother whom he describes as sweetly and agonizingly mad. Sibling rivalry stimulated Biven's athletic prowess and led him into military school. These special athletic skills and the capacity to confront aggression would later give way to a more reflective mode that likely resulted from his psychoanalytic training. He credits one brother particularly in leading him from a physical to a more reflective stance.

True Pretenses takes the reader on a journey through several case studies, and at times into quite disconnected theoretical papers on the metapsychology of people who manifest aggression in the way they live. The author begins with a series of chapters on physically violent individuals who have sadomasochistic tendencies. His theory is that the crime and the way it is set up enact the traumatized past of the killer in a crime ritual. Biven not only elaborates the theme of dehumanization of the victim by the killer—necessary in order to deal with the affect involved in the act of murder—but also postulates a complicated ritual or tableau that is part of that process.

In chapter 2, the author deals with suicide as a form of introverted murder, enacted by adolescents as a compromise formation. Biven's clinical description does not make a very convincing case for compromise formation as libidinal gratification, and seems out of place in this work (this is no doubt a paper that he wrote in earlier years).

The next, brief chapter outlines the theoretical basis of Biven's work, which is based on the idea of a developmental network that lays the foundation for violent deviations from a healthy pathway. In some ways, the author seems to argue for a unique model of regression, fixation, and progression, applicable to the development of violent people.

In the next chapter, Biven discusses the treatment of a severely disturbed adolescent who had a number of fantasies and issues around his own skin as a boundary. The author makes a good case for the role that the skin has as a psychologically cathected organ. Biven theorizes that the skin can function as a way of containing violent and uncontrollable impulses so that they do not get out of hand: "The skin serves as a concrete part object of another's strength" (p. 69).

The next chapter is a rather scattered literature review on the role of the skin in normal and abnormal development. Biven argues that skin is both a physical boundary and a cathected boundary, psychologically, which he believes has been underemphasized in psychological and psychoanalytic writings. Vignettes and materials from the poetry of Sylvia Plath are used to illustrate his point.

The chapter on the role of repression adds little to the overall argument of the book. The next chapter illustrates the resilience of an 11-year-old girl who was sexually assaulted. Chapter 9 is an interesting discussion of female perversions; until quite recently, this disorder was considered the exclusive purview of men—i.e., women were not thought to be capable of having the same castration fears as men (a very dated Freudian idea). Chapter 10 considers sexual abuse of men by women.

In chapter 11—one of the more tantalizing in the book—the author discusses supportive friendships and psychoanalytic therapy. Here he seems quite embarrassed by his departure from rigid, classical notions of neutrality, abstinence, and anonymity in the treatment of this type of patient; but in a more contemporary, relational context, his treatment would be considered quite appropriate and psychoanalytic. In sessions, at times, Biven found that he had to be honest and real, but allowing himself to function this way seemed to him to mean stepping outside the prescribed classical notions.

Chapter 12 begins with a rather long-winded discussion of *inductio primum* as a primary aspect of experimental method. The author sees the psychoanalytic method as an example of this, although many methodologists would disagree with him here. His

idea that observation establishes “relationships between circumstances and behavior” (p. 204) sets the stage for an argument about psychoanalysis as a natural science, one that utilizes systematic observation and measurement. I find this a rather superficial treatment of the complexities of applying natural science and brain behavior models to psychoanalysis.

In chapters 13 and 14, the author describes a major project he developed to provide emergency psychiatric services to “itinerant and somewhat delinquent youngsters” (p. 240). The British Government supported the project. Biven tried to help these children with a “rather odd mix of research, social services, and counseling” (p. 245)—an approach that he says has been adopted by the government as an appropriate way to handle juvenile offenders. This approach combines a deep, caring attitude with a capacity to confront the child in a nonsadistic and warm way about distasteful character traits, without triggering serious regressions and acting out. Biven’s project involved severely disturbed children who had a likelihood of becoming violent, as illustrated in a clinical vignette describing a child with multiple foster parents and grossly inadequate natural parents; foster families could not tolerate this child, and it was concluded that he needed some sort of long-term therapeutic environment, which was not readily available elsewhere.

In contrast to Biven’s project, most psychiatric facilities tend to have criteria that exclude any level of violence that might threaten staff members. And psychiatric workers, by virtue of their training, are very often unsuited to handle violent impulsivity. My own experience in working in inpatient settings is that many of the staff are extremely fearful of violence, and tend to react either with revulsion for the violent patient, or with a mothering, “you-are-a-poor-hurt-child” response. Either reaction leaves them unprepared for violence, and in the final analysis, staff members can be seen to ignore a large part of the problem, in which impulse control is a rage response to trauma, not merely a response to hurt. Self psychological views of the nature of anger, in my opinion, have fueled this fire.

Ultimately, I have been left wondering whether such counter-transferential reactions to violent individuals are so pervasive within our profession that we have literally shut out the possibility of needed psychiatric care for people simply because they frighten us personally. In fact, in the United States, a high percentage of inmates in the prison system are psychiatrically disturbed with impulse-control problems; and some have called U.S. prisons the last psychiatric hospitals—a comment in which, sadly, there is a strong element of truth.

True Pretenses is the story of a clinical life. It is a collection of papers written by the author over a period of several decades (which in some instances could use additional editing). Some of the papers seem relevant to the overall topic—that is, the treatment of severely disturbed, physically acting out young people—and others seem quite dated, if not incidental to the topic, and appear to represent particular biases of the author.

In reading this book, I sensed the work of a gifted therapist—a man who was able to use his own problems, stemming in part from his upbringing, to develop a special sympathy, tolerance, and tenacity with patients whom most of us will not treat. For this reason, *True Pretenses* is an important contribution to the psychoanalytic literature.

STUART W. TWEMLow (HOUSTON, TX)

PSYCHOANALYSIS AS AN EMPIRICAL INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE. Edited by Patrizia Giampieri-Deutsch. Vienna, Austria: Verlag Der Oosterreichischen Akademie Der Wissenchaften, 2005. 310 pp.

This collection of papers on contemporary psychoanalytic research represents a sample of current explorations in and around the field. Published in English, the book developed out of international symposia on this topic, conducted by the Austrian Academy of Sciences from 2001 to 2003. In her introduction, in discussing the historical and philosophical conflicts about whether

psychoanalysis is a science, editor Patrizia Giampieri-Deutsch notes that the field has survived both its dismissive detractors and proponents who proffered a special status different from the natural sciences.

This book's emphasis is on documenting Freud's epistemological approach as a monist. Mind is physically embodied; the physical and the mental exist along a continuum. When Freud set aside his scientific project because he had gone as far as possible according to the state of knowledge about brain function at that time, and when he found that studying the psychological was an open avenue, he pursued the scientific method in a nonreductive, methodological physicalism, discovering regularities, generalizations, and explanations, subject to modification and correction with accumulating experience. His metapsychology was a superstructure, offering a provisional grasp, subject to testing and control.

In Freud's view, the psychological was a dependent concomitant of physical processes. He made clear his hope and expectation that the psychoanalytic superstructure would one day be supported by a physical foundation. *Psychoanalysis as an Empirical Interdisciplinary Science* is presented in that spirit. It is organized in three sections, described below.

*"Psychoanalysis, Philosophy of Mind, and Experimental Sciences:
Research on Conscious and Unconscious Processes"*

Howard Shevrin contributes an elegant chapter on developments in subliminal research, in which he emphasizes that, while psychoanalysis offers the only comprehensive theory of mind that we have, empirical and experimental methods of study are a necessity. After describing his own use of such methodology, he concludes that consciousness cannot be fully understood without knowledge of unconscious processes, and that unconscious processes are not just latent, but also complex and highly interactive with conscious processes. Furthermore, both person and context must be taken into account, and quantitative and qualitative differences between conscious and unconscious processes must be considered.

In a philosophical contribution, Linda Brakel provides an account of drive theory and primary process. She suggests that drives and affects belong to distinct categories, and elaborates the concept of drive objects with regard to singularity and indeterminacy, distinguishing an analytic view from that of propositional-attitude psychology.

Max Velmans explores causal interactions between consciousness and unconscious mind and brain. Through the use of imagery, hypnosis, and biofeedback, he presents clinical evidence of the effect of conscious mental states on physical states. He describes problems in efforts to explain that mind-body interactions are translated into brain-body interactions. The physical world appears closed. He asks: How conscious *is* conscious if one is not conscious of the processing, for there is no introspective access to preconscious cognitive processes; we become aware of results without being conscious of the process.

In attempting an answer, Velmans suggests that there is one mental life, but two ways of knowing it. From a first-person perspective, conscious experiences have causal effects. From a third-person perspective, causality can be explained in neural terms. The information structure is identical, encoded in imagery and feelings or neural physical correlates. Adaptive physical adjustments are on automatic pilot. There is a lag between the workings of the brain and conscious apprehension. The brain prepares a given action pre-consciously, 350 milliseconds before the conscious wish to act appears.

Velmans states that this finding does not argue against the voluntary nature of preconscious processing. Preconscious processing "enables the ability to exercise the choice, flexibility, and control that we experience We are both the preconscious generating processes and the conscious results" (p. 114). In conclusion, the author postulates (tongue-in-cheek) that Freud would probably wholeheartedly agree with the view that the consciously experienced self is just the tip of the preconscious mind.

David Rosenthal reviews conceptions of consciousness. For Brentano, it is an innate quality of the mental state; for Freud, it acts like a sense organ that perceives qualities of the mental state. Rosenthal describes problems inherent in both these conceptions

and offers an alternative. Higher-order thoughts are necessary to make a mental state conscious; the mind is not transparent to itself. Higher-order thoughts can represent states of consciousness more flexibly and specifically than a sensing modality. Language and speech facilitate consciousness. Psychoanalytic interpretations are inferential higher-order thoughts that have to become part of the consciousness of a mental state through identification with the interpreter. However, what spontaneously determines the occurrence of higher-order thoughts and consciousness remains vague in Rosenthal's account.

Pierre Jacob engages the topic of *first-person and third-person mindreading*, the ascription of states of mind to oneself or others, with knowledge of and belief in their contents. He contends with a cognitive proposal that mindreading can be explained by way of mental simulation. This view arises as an alternative to rationalist and empiricist explanations, whose shortcomings are explained by the author. Simulation theorists, utilizing an analogy to the function of a computer, suggest that cognitive mechanisms can be used off-line in a pretend mode.

It has been discovered in neuroscience that mirror neurons in the macaque monkey discharge when an animal perceives or performs action, providing the basis for mimicry involving motor, not social, intention. Jacob notes the conceptual confusion between imitation and mimicry. Mimicry is ubiquitous and automatic, but imitation is intentional. Unlike monkeys, humans do not simply reproduce actions; instead, they pursue intentions and states of mind. Neither the attitude nor the content of a mental state can be copied.

Introspection is conceptual, not perceptual. There is a gap between pretense and ascribing beliefs, which requires interpretation. Jacob's paper ultimately offers a cautionary note about the uncritical use of computer metaphors and suggestive neurological findings like mirror neurons.

"Current Interdisciplinary Research: Neuroscience and Psychoanalysis"

Karl Pribram comments on the relevance of "Project for a Scientific Psychology" (Freud 1895) in the twenty-first century, noting

that Freud's double-loop mechanism for attention has been borne out by research, which demonstrates a delay involving reality testing between stimulus, on the one hand, and action and awareness, on the other. Attention is an automatic function, followed by consciousness, which then shapes subsequent behavior. Pribram uses computer programming as a metaphor: the computer operates on a binary code, which is converted into languages of higher and higher order; at the top of that hierarchy is the word processor, which can communicate with us in our language.

Pribram conceives of hierarchical structures and modules in the brain in dendritic receptor fields that process experience; these serve a purpose similar to that of quantum holography in processing MRIs. The processing is not available to consciousness, only the output. However, consciousness is not simply an epiphenomenon, Pribram adds; it shapes subsequent behavior, adding to the processing codes. He utilizes interesting metaphors that offer a grasp of brain function at the same time that they underline the complexity inherent in designing and implementing further interdisciplinary research.

Regina Pally's chapter is on emotion and the role of the body in mental life. She suggests that, in emotion, mind and body join forces for an adaptive encounter. Most emotions occur without conscious awareness. Feelings are the subconscious response to biochemical, autonomic nervous system and motor behavior. Emotion is involuntary, and consciousness permits the regulation of emotion.

With regard to memory and defenses, Pally states that declarative or explicit memory is strengthened by optimal levels of emotion. Memory of an emotion in association with sensory, motor, and contextual aspects of the experience is stored as a somatic marker, influencing subsequent reactions. Too much or too little emotion impairs memory, and when too little emotion is combined with a disavowal of affect, the remedial effect of experience is limited and there may be forgetting. In post-traumatic stress disorder, impaired forgetting and chronic arousal vitiate defenses. In fact, Pally notes, rational thinking is not so rational; "heartfelt reactions" and "gut

decisions” may not be mere metaphorical descriptions. Her chapter stresses the importance of acknowledging the effects of trauma in setting limits on expectable results of treatment.

Fred Levin presents a complex chapter on an interdisciplinary look at how psychoanalysis might activate learning via its effects on emotional attention. The author states that the key to this chapter is the role of cytokines on synaptic plasticity. He quotes Abel, Martin, Bartsch, and Kandel: “The neuronal activation of genes means simply that the molecular basis of memory may hinge on the balance between chemical factors that establish versus those that inhibit synaptic plasticity” (p. 212). Levin adds:

When under the influence of psychoanalysis, new opportunities for learning occur; this can reasonably be ascribed to the activation and creation of novel synapses, produced simultaneously with the psychoanalytic maneuvers. First the new synapses help form novel neural networks in the brain of that analytic patient; later these networks will lead to new long-term memory, that is, new learning. [p. 212]

The author describes in detail the current view of neuroscience knowledge regarding learning and memory. According to an interdisciplinary approach to a theory of learning, psychological and neurochemical phenomena are co-dependent. Levin’s emphasis is on the significance of an emotional component in learning. Analytic learning provides safety and spontaneity as a form of conditioning, facilitating insight with changes in synaptic plasticity, a process that is largely unconscious. Levin believes that what Freud called the *drive organization of memory* was an intuitively correct depiction of an adaptive learning process in which synaptic plasticity is altered by affective experience.

In a postscript on interdisciplinary research, the author acknowledges the difficulty in aligning these two perspectives. Identifying his contribution as speculative, he emphasizes that what is required to fulfill the desired goal of furthering psychoanalytic knowledge is input from various philosophical approaches and ongoing collaboration across disciplinary boundaries.

"Empirical Research Trends in Psychoanalysis"

Stuart Hauser, in a chapter entitled "Overcoming Adversity in Adolescence: Narratives of Resilience," describes a research effort focused on the study of resilience. Eight young adults, men and women, were seen to lead competent and productive lives after major derailments in adolescence. They had experienced serious psychiatric disorders and had been hospitalized for two months to two years during middle adolescence. Data from the adolescent period was studied in conjunction with annual developmental and personality measures, as well as recorded interviews, in what became, in effect, a twenty-year longitudinal study.

Hauser notes that the study's early investigations were theory driven, constrained by coding conventions and technical language, and left a feeling that something important was being missed. Consequently, researchers then changed their technique to include the participants' narratives, which identified personal meanings and ways in which the subjects made sense of their world. The major personality features that emerged as significant were a capacity for reflection, self-efficacy, or agency; self complexity; persistence and ambition; and an overall increase in self-esteem and coherence in the narrative flow. Hauser highlights the importance of a psychoanalytic clinical approach bent on discovery in empirical research.

Rolf Sandell explores the meaning of the concept of structural change and its assessment in the context of Stockholm outcome studies. He outlines the multiple, confusing uses of this vague concept, questioning whether structural change is specific to psychoanalysis, whether all changes in analysis are structural, and how change is assessed. He quotes Rapaport and Gill:

A structure is often defined usefully and generally as something which is the means by which a given function is carried out and which has a relatively slow rate of change compared to other processes That is, it has a degree of permanence in psychological functioning. [p. 271]

Sandell conveys the complexities in defining this concept with an eight-point definition of his own. On the basis of evidence from

the Stockholm project, he notes that psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic therapy may be expected to produce stable change; however, there are structural concepts outside of psychoanalysis with theories of their own to account for change. Within the field, Boesky, Abend, and Kris are quoted in relation to cures accomplished through manipulation, identification, and supportive measures, respectively, resulting in structural change (see p. 275). Following a section on instruments for assessment, Sandell raises the question of whether various attributes are indicative of structural change, and concludes that they are, as with "any stable change in any stable function" (p. 283).

Jorge Canestri writes about what the sciences of language have to offer to psychoanalysis, indicating the complexity in the field by citing regional differences in authors' bibliographical references. He suggests a minimal outline of relevant concepts that might be useful to psychoanalysis, and elaborates briefly on the philosophy of language, discourse analysis, rules of transformation in listening and interpretation, acquisition of language, and a general theory of representation.

Canestri's summary comments assume an acquaintance with the literature. Yet he notes that he has chosen only a few samples of what the sciences of language have to offer psychoanalysis. Furthermore, he suggests that he could reverse the process and fruitfully suggest to the sciences of language what psychoanalysis has to say to them. In effect, he makes clear the magnitude of the task in communication and research if an attempt at interdisciplinary interaction is contemplated.

* * * * *

As Giampieri-Deutsch notes in her introduction to this volume, there is little current communication between philosophers and psychoanalysts. Except for occasional references to Freud, the bibliographies in the chapters of this book do not include any psychoanalytic contributions. (Of course, the same holds true for psychoanalytic papers' failure, typically, to incorporate philosophy refer-

ences.) Concepts like introspection and empathy, projective identification, transference, and mentalizing—although clearly vitally related to any study of consciousness and the unconscious—exist in a world apart from most philosophical studies. Interdisciplinary interaction is more a wish, however worthy and desirable, than a reality.

The chapters in this volume offer a sampling—by no means an exhaustive one—of developments in fields of knowledge related to psychoanalysis, largely existing side by side, with all too little interaction among them. The degree to which other fields are available or susceptible to interdisciplinary efforts obviously varies. Psychoanalysis has its own multiple paradigms, clinical and theoretical, posing problems in integration that can be daunting. Many analysts would argue for a kind of insularity, with the view that we analysts already have enough on our plate.

However, such a view negates the prospect of mutual enrichment in joint research efforts. Studies in human development have certainly benefited psychoanalysis. Kandel and Fonagy in neuroscience, and Emde in human development, are examples of researchers who have made significant integrative efforts. There are active interdisciplinary study groups to be heard from. Clinical psychoanalysis could indeed serve as a laboratory to test ideas and hypotheses emerging in other fields, and would have much to offer in return. My own experience in a small group of clinicians working with Wilma Bucci, in which we provided a clinical reading of psychodynamic process in taped interviews, and then related this to events conceptualized according to Bucci's theory, was exciting and very encouraging.

Scholars in related fields are entering psychoanalysis as research candidates and making significant contributions. In an ideal world, perhaps psychoanalysts in their training and development might be encouraged to delve into one or another related field as researchers. The international meetings from which this volume emerged attest to the vital need for interdisciplinary interaction.

NATHAN SCHLESSINGER (CHICAGO, IL)

PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY: A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE. By Nancy McWilliams. New York: Guilford Press, 2004. 354 pp.

This is the final volume in Nancy McWilliams's trilogy of psychoanalytic primers for clinicians.¹ While both her earlier books have been rightfully heralded for their erudition, user-friendly style, trenchant clinical examples, and wide applicability in an age of competing theoretical dispositions, this new arrival is particularly noteworthy for the clinical wisdom and uncommon courage it brings to tackling an array of problems that psychodynamic practitioners face every day, but rarely speak about openly.

The author is a master clinician and sought-after teacher who displays an abiding, deep love for the discipline of psychoanalysis and the values and unique perspective it brings to patient care. Without deriding other points of view or forms of therapy, her clarion call for a treatment process that "feels to both parties like a conversation from the heart, not the head" (p. 66), and simultaneously promotes "personal growth . . . or a depth of understanding about universal issues" (p. 17), rings throughout every chapter, and hints at why many young clinicians who have completed a psychiatric residency or graduate school are turning to institutes or postgraduate psychodynamic therapy programs for additional education. Aiming to touch and to assist those clinicians who are new to the field, and who want and need to know the nuts and bolts of what McWilliams calls the "psychodynamic sensibility" and how to put its principles of treatment into action, she is sure to find a captive audience.

I became aware of the pedagogic potency of this book months before I was asked to review it. Because McWilliams's earlier works are now considered standard references in psychiatric residencies that continue to include psychodynamic theory and opportunities to practice the craft within the core curriculum, it should have

¹ See: (1) McWilliams, N. (1994). *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis: Understanding Personality Structure in the Clinical Process*. New York: Guilford Press; and (2) McWilliams, N. (1999). *Psychoanalytic Case Formulation*. New York: Guilford Press.

come as no surprise that third- and fourth-year residents had already discovered the uncommon usefulness and beneficent tone of this “practitioner’s guide,” and had begun to cite it in case conferences and psychotherapy seminars. Believing that it is always a good thing for the teacher to try to stay up-to-date with what the younger generation is reading, thinking, and talking about, I was pleased to have an additional excuse (i.e., writing this review) to study the work in its entirety. I was not a bit surprised to find (considering the breadth and depth of McWilliams’s other writing) that it has just as much to offer the experienced clinician as the novice, even though its relatively modest size and fluid style lend it particular appeal as an introductory text.

In fact, it would be unfortunate if seasoned therapists and analysts take a glance at the title or table of contents and then decide to put the book down, thinking that they are already quite familiar with or battle weary from the topics listed, such as therapist and client readiness, boundaries, limit setting, occupational hazards, and establishing the therapeutic frame. One would then miss out on McWilliams’s nuanced and lively discussions of the usually neglected topics of how therapeutic power and love are actualized in treatment; the importance of owning and learning from our curiosity, awe, and multifaceted needs for attachment; and the “borrowed faith” that both participants in the dyad must have for healing to occur. While this text takes up most of the basics needed to help the newcomer get started and delve deeper into clinical material, and hence is a natural and welcome guide for the classroom, it is one of those classics that can and should be read with as much enthusiasm and interest by the teacher or seminar leader as the student.

One especially appealing facet of the book is the subtle, subversive salvo that McWilliams foists on Western culture’s narcissism, exaltation of the quick fix, and thrill of idealized love—especially of the ilk found in some naive, superficial therapeutic techniques that rely only on cultivating the positive transference. When dealing with the concrete ways in which therapists may negotiate fees and think about money, she takes the opportunity to call into ques-

tion why we therapists sometimes devalue what we do. She opines that: "In contemporary Western culture, respectful listening is rare enough to justify a decent remuneration; we tend to undervalue activities that are receptive rather than based on doing, producing, manufacturing, achieving, and so on" (p. 116).

The author answers those who castigate the time and the emotional and financial investment required to "build psychic architecture that supports the capacity to bear life" by outlining some of the "ancillary lessons" one learns from the experience of being in treatment. These include "the potential for attaining a kind of wisdom about life, about who we are and what we seek, about what is possible and what is not, about what can be changed and what must be mourned" (p. 241). With the kind of self-effacing, humorous strokes that lace her other works, she instructs the novice that he or she might deal with hate that finally begins to emerge in the transference by telling the patient, "It's progress that you can now *admit* to hating me, but I'm hoping you'll come to *enjoy* that feeling" (p 247, italics in original).

Another theme that runs throughout the chapters is the essential attribute of the therapist's honesty. McWilliams is open about her technical or empathic errors, even as her facile integration of theory and practice make abundantly clear how and why her patients make significant strides over their years in treatment. While avoiding false humility or self-depreciation, she eschews the common flaw of analytic scholars who write about their students' and supervisees' gaffs or mistakes, but rarely reveal their own. She exemplifies her unassuming stance by poking a bit of fun at herself.

For example, she mentions a paranoid, hypervigilant patient who never witnessed her stifle a yawn: "the perfection of what one of my colleagues calls the 'nose yawn' is one of my most cherished professional achievements" (p. 233). What a delightful gift McWilliams gives us by revealing her humanity as a reminder to lighten up and not take ourselves so seriously; surely, every therapist can identify with moments like the one she describes, making the reading of the text both refreshing and experience near.

Midway through the book, she proposes that one healing factor explicit in “psychoanalytic love” is the therapist’s capacity to accept herself and the patient as they are, thereby squelching any tendency toward collapse into mutual idealization, or those “loaded invitations” that result in damaging enactments. Uniting the apposite forces of love and honesty in psychodynamic treatment, she explains:

Like any kind of love worth the name, it (psychoanalytic love) is not based on distortion; that is, therapists do not idealize clients in order to feel loving toward them. We try to love them as they are and have faith that they can grow in ways they need to grow. I doubt that anyone can feel truly loved unless he or she has been truly recognized as a combination of positive and negative qualities, good and evil. Here I return to the theme of honesty; in supporting the effort to pursue and name what feels true, no matter how unattractive, the therapist creates the conditions under which clients can feel loved for who they really are. [p. 161]

In two detailed chapters that demonstrate the depth of her clinical work with a neurotic and a characterologically disturbed patient, respectively, McWilliams captures why every patient “offers an entire professional education.” Taking a crafty lob at the nature of so-called objective research studies, she reminds practitioners that:

Our expertise never gets translated into official mental health statistics, partly because of the private nature of independent practice, partly because a lot of what one essentially does with these very troubled individuals is prevention. One can hardly present solid evidence for the number of suicides one has thwarted, or psychotic breaks that have been avoided, or hospitalizations that became unnecessary, or abused children who never were. [p. 239]

Little lessons like this are peppered throughout the text and are particularly eloquent reminders for busy clinicians who work outside the containing walls of an institutional setting, or who are no

longer in a training program and need a bit of balm for the chafed "therapeutic skin." For example, I found the book very useful as an aid in doing consultations when an experienced, astute psychiatrist sought a routine consultation with me to review the treatment of a schizoid man who, in her words, "inhabited a world of seemingly lifeless beings." The therapy was creeping along when this clinician found herself chagrined by the amount of energy it took "just to show up and be with this guy three times a week." While our consultative work seemed to provide some of the necessary holding and encouragement to continue, I found myself turning to, reading, and then copying the following passage as yet another avenue through which to express to this clinician the meaning and inherent value in her persistence with the difficult therapeutic task that still lay ahead of her:

Patients in this group have a bad reputation among mental health professionals because of their apparent self-absorption and their indifference to the therapist's humanity, and yet the moments when an "empty" client finds a compelling and genuine way to speak can be profoundly moving to both client and clinician. Compared with other patients, the progress of these individuals seems slower, and their acknowledgment of progress slower still, but over time they do take in the therapist's sincere interest, emotional honesty, and relative incorruptibility, and what has been a very chilly inner world begins to be warmed by that internalization. [p. 257]

A final chapter on self care for the therapist rounds out this major contribution and is not to be missed. Dividing her lessons into "Care for the Id," "Care for the Ego," and "Care for the Super-ego," McWilliams dashes over essential practical information and suggestions, such as the therapist's need for sleep and rest, protecting health and livelihood, doing right by family and colleagues, and finding ways to play and to keep enjoying the work. Likely, these topics could be expanded into another essential text for therapists, but even by focusing on the requirements in a cursory way, she does the field a service.

In all likelihood, this section will be one of the most welcome for clinicians who have spent some time in the trenches, because one of the “professional hazards” McWilliams addresses is our tendency to become inured to the potential psychological and physiological costs of our work. Drawn to the healing professions by an omnipotent desire to rectify insidious family dynamics, losses, and misattunement, even therapists who have undertaken a thorough and searching personal treatment are rife to put their own needs on the back burner.

Turning to the classic work of Winnicott and the contemporary contributions of Eigen in regard to taking the therapist’s mortality into consideration, McWilliams reminds us of our “obligation to stay alive,” which is at once a burden and a necessary ingredient if we are to help “people with deep convictions about their toxicity” (p. 277). We fail to recognize and pay attention to our animal and human needs not only at our own cost, but to our patients’ detriment as well.

Despite this kudos, I do have a few small bones to pick with McWilliams. Occasionally, she references persons who are not well known in the field and does not tell us their identities. One assumes such persons are trusted colleagues or fellow teachers in her circle, but I would have appreciated just a tidbit of biographical data when their published works are not cited in the bibliography.

A more substantive criticism is the author’s occasional reliance on the word *client* as opposed to *patient*.² While the former term is preferred in many contemporary mental health settings, and may even be a holdover or inheritance from the author’s particular training programs—and hence not chosen for its political correctness—it has always struck me that people seek us out because they suffer and are in need of a particular kind of listening for relief of their pain. While the word *client* is supposedly used because it is nonstigmatizing and egalitarian, it calls to my mind the busi-

² *Book Review Editor’s Note:* For another reviewer’s note about an author’s choice to use *clients* to refer to patients in another book reviewed in this section, see p. 676, footnote 3.

ness of lawyers, estate planners, and tax assessors, and obfuscates what is actually an essential issue for the human being who seeks *psychotherapeutic* help. Ironically, it is the *patient*—the one who suffers—who has the most to gain from immersion in the kind of understanding that McWilliams champions and is committed to inspiring in a new generation of psychodynamically trained clinicians.

Compared to the many pearls garnered in this book, these criticisms are minuscule. *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy: A Practitioner's Guide* is a brilliant synthesis of heart and mind by one of our foremost psychoanalytic scholars, and one that will help ignite the passion of those entering the field, stir the intellectual embers of those who are already laboring within it, and fuel lively discussion in seminars and didactic courses for years to come.

KATHRYN J. ZERBE (PORTLAND, OR)

PRACTICING INTERSUBJECTIVELY. By Peter Buirski. New York: Jason Aronson, 2005. 156 pp.

According to the author, this book was conceived as a sequel to his earlier book.¹ While I have not read the earlier one, I would characterize Buirski's new book as an attempt to explicate and illustrate his "intersubjective systems" philosophy and approach to psychoanalytic psychotherapy. The chapters cover the application of intersubjective theory to a wide range of topics (including psychotherapy technique, multicultural treatment, prejudice, trauma, and a reinterpretation of the Wolf Man case); many of them are co-authored by colleagues.

As an analyst interested in learning more about the intersubjective perspective, I found the book interesting but frustrating. My frustration had to do with a tension between the clinical and the theoretical material that runs throughout the book. For the most part, the clinical sections describe solid, if unremarkable, psychodynamic psychotherapy (not psychoanalysis). In contrast, the theo-

¹ Buirski, P. & Haglund, P. (2001). *Making Sense Together: The Intersubjective Approach to Psychotherapy*. New York: Jason Aronson.

retical presentation is extreme and polemical, rife with critical-thinking errors and unacknowledged contradictions. Much of the book, for example, is a critique of traditional psychoanalytic theory and practice, which Buirski variously refers to as a *one-person, isolated minds, objectivist, and hierarchical* version of psychoanalysis. He contrasts this with his own *radically contextual, post-Cartesian, co-constructed*, intersubjective systems theory. Set up in this caricatured, binary fashion, the critique comes across as a rather tedious attack on men of straw. I will return to this later, but first will explain further the significant internal contradictions within Buirski's theoretical arguments.

Probably the best way to convey Buirski's arguments and the philosophical problems they exhibit is to quote him. I will focus on what appears to be his central point throughout the book: the claim that objective, enduring, individual mental contents, attributes, and structures do not really exist, since all human experience and behavior is "contextually co-constructed," and thus caused by unique contextual factors (hence, the title of chapter 1: "There's No Such Thing as a Person"). Buirski puts it this way: "Intersubjective systems theory is most fundamentally a radically contextual perspective and not a theory of mental contents and structure" (p. 3).

To illustrate this statement, Buirski refers to baseball players, suggesting that it is misleading to talk about them as having stable (i.e., "objective," "one-person") characteristics because each at-bat situation is a unique event. In Buirski's words, "There is no such thing as Barry Bonds. There is only Bonds at this at-bat against this pitcher in this point in this game in this stadium and so on" (p. 5).

While it contains an important grain of truth, this statement is a remarkable oversimplification (and it would surely cause a chuckle among those who scout, recruit, coach, and pay athletes!). Of course, it is true that everyone's behavior includes considerable variance (to use psychologists' technical vocabulary), much of which is attributable to contextual factors. It is also true that psychoanalysis has traditionally tended to downplay the influence of contextual factors (such as the therapist's personality) on human

behavior. But these are matters of degree, and Buirski treats them as black-and-white binaries.

Lest the reader suspect that I am exaggerating Buirski's position, let me add that he leaves no question that he means what he says in an even more extreme statement about diagnosis and personality:

Another example of isolated-mind thinking is evident in the Axis II designations of the DSM-IV-TR If he meets the specified criteria, a man may be labeled with a personality disorder, as in, "He is a borderline." Such diagnoses or labels treat the individual as separate and distinct from the experiential world in which he is immersed. "Borderline" is viewed as an immutable state, a condition that exists in isolation, as if the individual's way of relating was unaffected by the relational context in which he finds himself. From the post-Cartesian, contextualist perspective, "borderline" is not a fixed state or a condition like measles—if I have it with John today, I might or might not enact them with John tomorrow or with Mary anytime. This perspective clearly diverges from one that assumes personality traits are an enduring and inseparable part of the whole person, like his or her head. [p. 7]

Interestingly, Buirski's untenable philosophical position is contradicted repeatedly by his own rather conventional clinical formulations²—all of which rely precisely on the idea of objective, enduring traits and patterns, as any coherent clinical theory must. In other words, when Buirski writes about cases, he describes trying to help clients with their all-too-stable and objective symptoms, pathogenic fantasies, and problematic traits—which, of course, are

² Buirski's comments about the etiology of symptoms, like his specific case formulations, rely on the very same *objective, one-person, intrapsychic* conceptual framework that he claims to abhor and eschew. For example, in a general statement about the etiology of emotional problems, Buirski states that "when self object functions are not provided on a consistent basis in the cultural milieu, a person may come to believe that he or she is not 'good enough'....In a misattuned care-giving environment, children may organize their experiences by believing that they are 'wrong' or 'bad,' rather than by attaching such labels to the caregiver who has failed to provide protection" (p. 83, italics added).

the reasons the clients came to treatment in the first place. I cite several examples below (emphases mine in each quotation):

- In his discussion of Silverman's (1987) infamous case of Miss K (in chapter 2), Buirski states: "We might speculate that Miss K has *organized her experience* around the notion that she is unimportant and that others have no interest in her" (p. 26).
- Mr. G (in chapter 3) has come to therapy because of *emotional distress and somatic symptoms* following a separation from his wife. Buirski writes that in his early work with Mr. G, "I continue to articulate the *organizing principle* of [Mr. G's] not feeling appreciated *His life, I imagine, must have felt very cold, isolated, and unloving*" (p. 52).
- Tracie (in chapter 4) came for treatment due to *low self-esteem and a problematic pattern*—"I always choose *emotionally unavailable men*." Buirski formulates the case as follows: "Tracie can be understood as struggling with something crushingly present: her *organization of experience* that she is defective and flawed and thus rightly to be blamed for the problems in her relationships" (p. 68).
- Mary (in chapter 7) suffered from a variety of symptoms following a brutal physical attack, as well as a preexisting "*vulnerability of . . . self-organization*." Buirski states, "Considering Mary's history of witnessing violence in her family, her experience of being invisible, unrecognized, and disposable, the assault had a profound impact on her *self-organization* Consistent with her *prior organization of experience*, Mary had made sense of this new assault as occurring because of something that she had done wrong" (p. 116).
- Finally, in his reinterpretation of the Wolf Man case, Buirski writes, "Freud failed to understand the way

Pankejeff's early experience had *become organized* and how his relationship with Freud was filtered through this *organization of experience*" (p. 131).

As the reader may have noticed from these examples, there is another significant irony and contradiction in the book—a contradiction related to Buirski's argument that intersubjective systems theory emphasizes the unique and contextual aspects of clients'³ experiences, the "illumination of personal meanings, without personal investment in where our journey will take us" (p. xvi). In rather stark contrast to this laudable ideal, most of the case formulations in the book sound remarkably similar, with the various clients' emotional problems almost always attributed to parental misattunement, which led to chronic feelings of being "unworthy" and/or "defective" (see, e.g., pp. 69, 85, 117). (It is particularly ironic that Buirski's book, in which he repeatedly eschews "objective" and theory-driven clinical formulations, exhibits the Procrustean style that he is critiquing.)

As a final example of the critical-thinking problems throughout the book, I will cite one more representative clinical passage. In chapter 3 ("Two Approaches to Psychotherapy"), Buirski describes an initial session with a patient in which he realizes part way through the hour that he has been deviating from his usual "empathic/introspective stance" and intersubjective treatment theory, and he makes a correction, with seemingly beneficial results. Buirski writes:

Mr. G became more sullen and resistant when approached from an insight-oriented perspective that he seems to experience as narcissistically injurious. He became increasingly irritable and disparaging of the therapist When engaged from a stance that attuned to, mirrored, and affirmed his affective experience, Mr. G became more open

³ Buirski prefers the term *client* to *patient*: "I have made an effort . . . to avoid the use of the term 'patient'. . . . 'Patient' suggests the very one-person, objectivist, hierarchical model of relationship that the intersubjective systems perspective abhors" (p. xvii).

⁴ *Book Review Editor's Note*: For a reviewer's note on the use of *clients* to refer to patients in another book reviewed in this section, see p. 671, paragraph 4.

to feelings and self-reflective about his experience and the meanings he made of that experience.

We have traditionally been led to expect that insight results from interpreting resistance and defense against knowing. In contrast, here is an illustration of how the empathic/introspective stance, with its focus on attunement to affect states, furthers self-reflection through avoidance of interactions that provoke defensiveness . . . Mr. G, who at first appeared to be a poor candidate for insight-oriented therapy, turns out to be quite open to knowing and revealing his inner affect states. [p. 60]

Buirski seems to be trying to argue that this vignette demonstrates that traditional Freudian techniques ("an insight-oriented perspective") are less effective than an "empathic/introspective stance." But the argument suffers from a number of critical-thinking flaws. Most important, Buirski relies on an anecdote as though it were evidence, and an anecdote about a particular kind of client, in an initial session, at that. Second, he fails to distinguish between the multiple, complex aspects of the therapist's behavior—for example, by implying that a "narcissistically injurious" clinical attitude is *necessarily* part and parcel of interpretive technique (in fact, interpretation is a technique that can be used in the context of a wide variety of clinical attitudes).

Similarly, Buirski treats his own "empathic/introspective stance" as a single entity, rather than teasing apart, to the extent possible, the various attitudes and techniques that make up this stance. Thus, Buirski's claim that the empathic/introspective stance is a better match for promoting insight than the resistance-interpreting stance conflates (at least) two variables as one. Even if we accept his reading of the clinical data, was it the interpretive technique or the accompanying injurious attitude that caused the initial problems? Was it the "affirming" attitude, the techniques of "introspection" and "mirroring," or some combination of the two that helped, later, to promote insight?

In addition, Buirski seems to unquestioningly assume that the aims of his "intersubjective" approach and "traditional" psychoanal-

ysis are singular and the same—promoting insight. At the same time, he confusingly labels traditional technique as “insight-oriented,” contrasts this with his “empathic-introspective” method, and yet claims that the latter more effectively promotes insight.

In summary, *Practicing Intersubjectively* may be of interest to those who would like to read about how one contemporary intersubjective systems theorist thinks about and practices psychotherapy. It will likely be frustrating to those hoping for a more compelling and coherent theoretical view. This is unfortunate given the pressing need for careful, critical work in separating the wheat from the chaff in psychoanalytic theory and practice.

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THE PSYCHOANALYSIS OF SCIENCE: THE ROLE OF METAPHOR, PARAPRAX, LACUNAE, AND MYTH. By Yehoyakim Stein. Brighton, U.K.: Sussex Academic Press, 2005. 190 pp.

Simply put, Yehoyakim Stein's project is to psychoanalyze psychoanalysis. Stein wants to reveal our blind spots—our conceptual lacunae, as he calls them—not merely as a historical exercise, but also to induce change in our field. Stein's underlying question is a fascinating one: why do we think about some human concerns in psychoanalysis and not others? He argues—and, I think, persuasively—that unless we analyze our blind spots, we will be stymied in our theoretical development. He also has some interesting ideas about how we can do this.

In Part I, "Locating the Irrational, Understanding the Repressed," Stein looks at the development of scientific ideas through the lens of psychoanalysis, which includes the unconscious drives and the cognitive unconscious. He reads texts hermeneutically—that is, he reads between the lines to find irrational elements that can be thought about psychoanalytically. Stein argues that the epistemological split between the objective and the subjective is hindering our creativity. He is skeptical of the current zeal for evidence-based methodology, which carries the unexamined mantle of a claim to

objective truth. He argues that irrationality, though alien to the scientific communancy-parturition triad, occupies a central place in all human cultures, yet not in psychoanalysis. Our fear of women, and particularly of the insides of their bodies, has prevented us from broadening our discussions and gaining more insight into the incest and menstruation taboos that are so basic to society. This lacuna in our theory is mirrored by an "analyst-patient pact of silence with regard to the inside of the body" (p. 62).

The author connects these fears about the inside of the body to primal fears of disintegration, crushing emptiness, and falling into space. He suggests that our focus on the Oedipus complex and castration anxiety eclipses discussion of these earlier fears, which "come much closer to the image of death and non-existence" (p. 51). As psychoanalysis began to deal with psychotics and borderlines, these earlier fears and images started to get more attention. But the capacity to produce images about the inside of the body and associations to them is limited in our field. Interestingly, Stein cites the work of Bettelheim and of the Lidzes, who studied other cultures and found evidence of these same primitive fears and images about the inside of the body. He wonders why they could find evidence in far-off cultures, but not on their own couches.

In Part III, "Scientific Myths and Lacunae: From Thanatos to Logos," Stein argues that psychoanalysis has consistently failed to explain nightmares and recurrent post-traumatic dreams within Freudian drive theory. He cites this failure as an example of the fact that ignoring exceptions to our theories leads to conceptual blind alleys in which we fail to ask questions that would lead to deeper understanding. Freud left us with an unsolved riddle of the relationship between signal anxiety and traumatic anxiety, and we have failed to produce a comprehensive anxiety theory that would account for both. Freud could not reconcile the two because this would have called into question both his drive theory and his general theory of neurosis. The post-traumatic dream and nightmare were swept under the rug because they did not fit into the theory of dreams as wish fulfillment.

Stein argues that in other scientific fields, exceptions to theories stimulate further exploration. If Freud had been able to explore this exception to his theory, such exploration could have led to a better understanding of the difference between signal anxiety and traumatic anxiety; it may also have led to further questions and information about wish fulfillment as it relates to dreams, whether all dreams are symbolic, and issues regarding the repetition compulsion and the significance of the manifest content of the dream.

In Part IV, "The Epistemological Split in Psychoanalysis," Stein contends that there is a tension in psychoanalysis beginning with Freud: our epistemology limits our aim, which he states is the free exploration of the internal world through fantasies and associations. The deterministic, positivistic trends in our epistemology limit our ability to explore the unconscious and to develop our theories. Stein systematically traces the deep conservatism evident in Freud's writings, even as he revolutionized psychoanalysis.

According to Stein, Freud needed to restrain his creation so that he would not lose control of it. He did not embrace what he thought were the nihilistic trends of the twentieth century in other sciences, particularly physics. Freud feared a scientific anarchy in which anything goes, in which everything is right and wrong at the same time. Stein argues that Freud, in spite of his own theories, could not turn away from a fundamentally positivist view in psychoanalytic theories for fear of a scientific free-for-all, and subsequent psychoanalytic theorists have followed suit.

Stein claims that an emphasis on countertransference does not represent an epistemological shift, since analysts who now see the positive value of countertransference think and use it in objectivist, positivist ways. He cites Sandler as having recognized that something is missing in an approach that emphasizes externalizations, projections, and projective identification; these do not describe or explain the complex process of transference-countertransference. Self psychology, while emphasizing empathy, nevertheless talks about an empathic *observer* of the other's experience. According to Stein, "the new epistemology rejects the idea that

the analyst's view is necessarily the correct one. Truth in the new epistemology is multi-determinable" (p. 128).

The denial of countertransference and its implications for epistemology is for Stein a major stumbling block in contemporary psychoanalysis. He argues for an intersubjective approach that avoids the pitfalls of both positivism and scientific anarchy. Human knowledge can only be known through the interaction of subject and object; "this means that no psychoanalytic interpretation would be valid unless it resonated in the unconscious of both analyst and patient" (p. 116). The author cites Spence, Schafer, and E. Schwaber in support of this view. He does not cite Ogden's work on the third or Ferro's on the field (conspicuous omissions, in my mind), leaving the reader to wonder how he might view their work, which is directly related to the issues addressed here.

In Part V, "Evolution, Revolution, Revelation, and Creativity in Psychoanalysis," Stein convincingly makes the point that the development of psychoanalysis has been thwarted by what he calls a *scientific symptom*: the enormous conflict between deductive psychoanalytic theory and inductive clinical experience. Stein argues that psychoanalysis, like all sciences, is "diseased," but it is particularly so; analysts, he claims, are mired in rigid dogma. We are afraid of putting forward our private theories, developed in our clinical work, for the public scrutiny of our peers. He reminds us that every analyst must struggle with ongoing tension between wanting to adhere to the tenets of our discipline and wanting to work according to our own individual tendencies. This results in an "epistemological double split" (p. 134), in which we confront in our daily clinical work the discrepancy between what ought to be, based on theories, and what we perceive and experience with our patients. He warns that we must confront this discrepancy between our private and public theories if we are to grow as a science.

Stein concludes his book with an epilogue in which he summarizes his basic argument that psychoanalysis will stagnate unless we examine our conceptual blind spots. He acknowledges that there are blind spots that he himself has not examined, such as

the role of the father in preoedipal development and the psychology of the aged.

The three lacunae addressed in this book stem from different hidden motives. First, the failure to take up the post-traumatic dream has resulted from a need to preserve an intact theory. Second, what Stein refers to as the double-split in psychoanalysis “reflects the discrepancy between what we want to see and what we do see (when we see it at all)” (p. 153). Third, the lacuna regarding the inside of the body reflects difficulty in seeing certain phenomena due to the inherent anxiety they evoke. Finally, the author ends the book with the observation of one last lacuna, which he says was the driving force behind the book: psychoanalysis has never shown much interest in science, something Stein clearly hopes to redress in this book.

Stein aims to get to the bottom of what hinders our development as a science and as a clinical endeavor. He wants to change the atmosphere of psychoanalysis to support open communication and exchange of ideas. His canvas is large and his vision is sweeping; these attributes are both the strength and the weakness of this book. Stein is at his best when he takes his comprehensive understanding of a certain area—for example, traumatic anxiety—and distills it into clear guidelines for conceptual development. However, at times he writes as if psychoanalysis were a homogenous, monolithic enterprise. This approach invites the reader to begin an argument with him about which theories he has left out of his wholesale claims about the field of analysis. I think many would argue that what he claims has been ignored is, in fact, being addressed in various ways and in various corners of the psychoanalytic world. For example, to name just a few examples that come to my mind, he does not include Ogden or Ferro, as mentioned earlier, or Loewald, the contemporary Kleinians, or representatives of the relational schools or of the many feminist critiques of psychoanalysis—all of whom have something to say about one or more of the lacunae Stein describes.

This is a dense, tightly argued book with copious footnotes. It is cumbersome, though necessary, to flip to the back of the book

to track the author's references, as it is sometimes difficult to know whose idea he is drawing on as he advances his argument. Some of his arguments are supported with dated references; for example, in his chapter on countertransference, he traces the history of this concept, paying attention to the shift from countertransference as obstacle to countertransference as tool, made possible by the new epistemology of a two-person psychology involving participation by the analyst. He argues that "object relational analysts are not good candidates for the new epistemology" (p. 128) because they consider countertransference positive only if it facilitates the analyst's commitment. He footnotes two references to support this claim: Little (1951) and Winnicott (1958). Since object relational theory has developed for almost another sixty years since his most recent citation, the reader is left feeling less convinced of Stein's otherwise interesting claims. Further, since object relational theory is not a homogenous or monolithic body of theory, this claim leaves the reader asking: is he really referring to *all* object relational theories?

To cite another example, Stein notes that the Budapest Congress of 1920 was devoted to the post-traumatic neuroses. "Seventy-five years after the Budapest Congress, psychoanalysis has not succeeded in crystallizing a theory of anxiety that sheds light on difficult clinical phenomena and theoretical problems" (p. 79), he writes. Since this book was published *eighty-five* years after the conference, this editorial mistake leaves the reader with the impression that Stein may not be up-to-date in his assertions, and/or that some of his chapters may have been "in the can" for a decade or more.

Although one can critique Stein for not being current enough or comprehensive enough, I believe that his overall argument is one worth heeding. Asking why certain questions have been difficult to think about in psychoanalysis leads Stein to important observations about the irrational forces at play in the very process of making theory. He constructs a convincing argument that examining the hidden, the internal, and the unseen in our existing theories will yield fresh ways of developing the tenets of psychoanaly-

sis. Further, he offers a blueprint to work from as we go forward in the second century of psychoanalytic theory. Persuading scientists of other stripes to embrace this approach—as Stein hopes to do—will, I believe, be a harder sell.

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ABSTRACTS

PSYCHE

Abstracted by Cordelia Schmidt-Hellerau

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Dream Theories and Dream Culture in Psychoanalytic Practice.
Ulrich Moser, part I: pp. 639-657; part II: pp. 729-750.

Reviewing the different, more recent dream theories, the author notices a current trend to understand the *manifest* dream content as an important indicator of the patient's specific state of mind. The structure of the manifest dream can be seen as a microcosm in which the dreamer's current excitatory processes are experienced within specific regulatory patterns. The author analyzes the material following certain cognitive criteria.

Departing from research findings on children's visual attention and dreams, Moser differentiates between a "where-system" (spatial orientation) and a "what-system" (features, attributes, or components of the objects). Both systems are activated in dreams as well as in perceptions. The "where-system" might be expressed in different forms: "distancing" of the dreamer, including *forgetting* and *not telling* the dream; *emotional distance*, e.g., by talking in the dream or by giving the dreamer the place of a *spectator* instead of an *active participant*, as well as the well-known metaphor of *the dream as theater on a stage*, or Lewin's theory of the *dream screen* onto which the dream is projected. The "what" of the dream always requires a location, "where" it takes place. Thus, the dream is part of a shaped *inner space*, linking it to Winnicott's potential space.

As a form of "basic knowledge" with which to understand dreams, the author develops a model representing the essential

core of what a dream culture should ideally be about. He states that each dream is a simulated microcosm with a simulated self, designed specifically for this one dream (other dreams feature other selves). The microcosm is created to the extent that the dreamer can bear the emerging affects. Within the dream, the dreamer can be called a *subject-processor*, a model of his or her own self, initiating processes as well as being affected by them. Both analyst and patient must identify with this subject-processor and walk through the dream as if it were reality.

Moser emphasizes that the particularity of the manifest dream's thought processes is not revealed via understanding its latent content, but is implied in the manifest content itself. Here it is important to note that each dream consists of a sequence of situations defined by interruptions, such as those that occur in order to change the self or to shrink the integrative span because of an increase of anxiety. Furthermore, the level of differentiation mirrors the level of information processing with regard to trauma and conflict. Thus, the organization of a dream allows one to appreciate the accessibility of a problem at a given moment. The dream is a "positional field" that regulates the involvement of affects, objects, and their interactions.

The author identifies the need to introduce a model capable of examining the relation between the microcosm of the dream, the transformation of its insight into reflexive thinking, and the transformation of both into the world of object relations, furthering the understanding of one's own inner world.

Betrayal of the Self: The Violence of Narcissistic Defense.
Winfried Trimborn, pp. 1033-1056.

If the infant's objects have not been sufficiently available as self-objects, the infantile ego reacts to premature loss, overwhelming anxiety, and helplessness by creating a pathologically narcissistic organization that is supposed to ward off future dangers of trauma and nameless dread, according to Trimborn. In denying separation and the related affects, the subject defends against the realiza-

tion of dependency, and thus against any meaningful object. Still, the longing for fusion with an idealized primary object will elicit fear of self-loss and necessitate the fight against that fear.

The author calls this pathological organization that defends against the reactivation of the primal trauma (including projective identification, splitting, manic denial, omnipotence, idealization, devaluation)—and thus works against the needy self—a *betrayal of the true self*; however, to give up this pathological organization will also be experienced as a betrayal, a betrayal of the false self. The author suggests that the ensuing violence seen in this pathology aims at preserving this narcissistic self-organization. The aggression strives to effect restitution and survival of the narcissistic self. The author emphasizes the difference between a self-preserving aggression and a sadomasochistic aggression; the former does not mean to hurt the object, but rather to extinguish the perception and awareness of the object (the threat of being extinguished via fusion with the object).

Trimborn differentiates between three basic structures of this pathological organization: (1) As long as the subject still searches for an object, the object relations are hysterical, sadomasochistic, and addictive; while the violence of the borderline personality consists in an omnipotent control of the object via projective identification and splitting between good and bad objects. (2) The subject tries to avoid any meaningful contact via schizoid and autistic withdrawal; the violence consists in a denial of dependency in favor of what seems to be autonomy. (3) The subject uses denial, negation, and foreclosure in order to annihilate the object; the violence corresponds to Green's work of the negative and represents destructive narcissism.

With regard to the traumatizing environment, the author distinguishes between three deficient and destructive containers: (1) Premature loss or repeated separations create a symbiotic-parasitic dyad; however, patients who suffered these have sometimes experienced enough care following the trauma so that they can develop some ego-strength. (2) If the parental couple is disturbed, resulting in an enduring pathological environment (a destruc-

tive container featuring devaluation, narcissistic exploitation, and boundary violations), a primitive narcissistic structure is created, aimed at splitting and eliminating the third. If the child is excessively subjected to parental projective identifications (maddening objects), it will remain identified with the denied hostility of the primary objects and tied to a violent primal-scene fantasy; these children remain part of a destructive couple because they have a binding as well as a splitting function for their parents, and thus are both rescuers and scapegoats for them. If the patient realizes this identification with the parental dysfunction, he/she experiences it as the loss of a special narcissistic position, and feels guilty of a betrayal of loyalty to his/her objects. This pathological family structure (often a combination of a spoiling, depressive, or narcissistic mother and an absent or sadistic-persecutory father) leads to an endless back and forth between greed/longing and rejection, stimulation and dissatisfaction/disappointment. (3) If the environment is destroyed or destructive (as with broken-home experiences), helplessness, deprivation, and archaic anxieties follow, leading to delinquency, psychoses, and psychosomatoses.

Experience of Time and the Depressive Position. Heinz Weiss, pp. 857-873.

The author departs from the assumption that, in the paranoid-schizoid condition, the past is omnipresent, while the future appears as the end of all time. The experience of time comes about only as a result of the conflicts of the depressive position. However, the depressive position can be achieved only when mourning, guilt, and loss allow for a feeling of separateness (the withdrawal of the projections).

Weiss wants to show that the feeling of timelessness indicates a denial of separateness, and that patients try to re-create a sense of timelessness within the analysis in order to avoid the conflicts of the depressive position. He suggests that the emergence of psychic space precedes the experience of time; hence, the first task of the analyst is to create this psychic space. Transference, in his view, is

not a displacement within time (a repetition of the past in the present, as Freud saw it), but a spatial displacement: the patient projects parts of his inner world into the analytic situation. Consequently, the analyst's interpretation does not aim at reconstructing the past, but at constructing space for the patient in helping him or her to reintegrate these projected parts, which simultaneously leads to an experience of separateness.

One form of timelessness is "romantic idealization": the patient feels the analysis fulfills all he or she has ever longed for; such a patient might be focused on the analyst's voice while disregarding the analyst's words. When the analyst interprets this, the patient experiences it as a cruel attempt to humiliate and dominate him or her. Endless romantic idealization then turns into endless suffering, both of which deny any separateness.

Another form of timelessness is "withdrawal into an omniscient desperation" that has to be maintained in order to ward off any feeling of hope, which would threaten the patient's psychic equilibrium. Further, "static hope and ongoing resentment" describe a state of mind that consists in painful waiting and illusionary hope that perpetuate a state of suffering; chronic resentment keeps old wounds open and does not allow for reparation.

Common to all these forms of timelessness is the defense against separation, loss, and mourning—continuation of the painful past. The author states that it is not memory that makes mourning possible, but vice versa: the ability to mourn leads to memory.

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Time Stands Still in Tearing Haste: A Psychoanalytic Case Study on Early Trauma and the Experience of Time. Gerd Schmithüsen, pp. 293-320.

The author differentiates between the relatively agreeable feeling of *timelessness* (in tension-free moments) and the *standstill of time*, which he understands as first experienced in a traumatic situation of breakdown—caused by a sense of overwhelming helplessness.

ness in the face of a chronically unavailable, intrusive, or dead object (Bion)—and later unconsciously activated in defense against the reexperience of this traumatic breakdown. The standstill of time corresponds to a psychic fixation on the trauma; however, the trauma is immortal as long as it is not understood (Gutwinski-Jeggle). Schmithüsen states that, in the analytic situation, the phenomena of a standstill of time first occur in the countertransference of the analyst, and reflect the patient's annihilation anxiety and fear of psychic death.

Utilizing a clinical example, the author shows how he worked with a patient who gave him a sense of a horrible nameless dread and a psychophysical numbness. The patient's way of talking without interruption put the analyst into a state of confusion, mental shutdown, and made time stand still. After many years of analysis, the patient became aware that he could not differentiate between himself and his analyst. He felt that he approached his analyst only as far as his periphery. When the analyst responded that it seemed to him that the patient avoided and excluded him, the patient explained: "I spin a web around you, then I sting you like a spider, and finally I digest you. That might give me a feeling of triumph—however, with a stale taste. I circle around myself—that's horrible, it goes on and on until you will say: let's give up and terminate. Then all I wanted in my good moments will be buried."

The analyst could then show the patient that to spin his analyst into his web and to digest and dissolve him resulted in his feelings of loneliness; thus, the patient would not be dependent on him, and there would be nobody who could abandon him or who would not be available for him. The patient responded: "But then there would be nobody I could leave, either—I could not leave, everything would go on, there would be no end to all of this."

The author shows in his discussion of the case material that the difficult moments in a treatment of this type occur when hope comes up in relation to the analyst. It is this hope for a relationship with the object that simultaneously brings up old feelings of loneliness, isolation, and being lost. With a standstill of time, the patient has tried to ward off a confrontation with overwhelming archaic

anxieties, deep desperation, and the breakdown of all structures—in short, agony. These anxieties have to be worked through with the analyst as an external and internal object in the time-limiting and structuring realities of the analysis.

The Psychodynamics of Collecting. Peter Subkowski, pp. 321-351.

Collecting is a ubiquitous phenomenon traceable to anthropological, sociobiological, and individual psychodynamics. It is found at a significantly higher rate of incidence in men than in women. Interestingly enough, there has been little written about the psychodynamics of collecting. Subkowski sketches the whole range, from mature ego-syntonic to pathological and addictive collecting habits, distinguishing between different categories of collected objects (real objects, sacred objects or totems, social or transitional objects, erotic objects, and fetishes) and the different functions that collections can have.

To psychoanalysts, best known is Sigmund Freud's collection of nearly 3,000 antiques, and his passionate search for these objects. It was also Freud who made a link between infantile anal eroticism and collecting objects, including the anal possession and retention of these objects. Freud noted about himself that, in foreign towns, he tended to misread shop signs, and that this revealed his wish to find additions to his collection—for example, when he thought he saw a sign saying "Antiques."

Here the author refers to Pieringer's description of the cultural history of man as moving from hunter to collector; a regression from this achievement is often found in collectors who get more and more passionate about their collections and consequently turn into hunters again. Subkowski mentions the case of a teacher who was later caught after having stolen about 1,000 precious medieval books from a cloister library and escaped through a secret corridor. Many collectors draw their thrill from a permanent search for rare and precious objects; once they feel a collection is complete, they start a new one.

All children collect items during a certain age period. The intense preoccupation with these objects has many cognitive functions (such as creating categories, making comparisons, etc.); and on a developmental level, these collected objects are used to interact with peers (permitting membership in particular groups, the exchange of objects, negotiating, etc.). This behavior is usually given up fairly soon.

Certain objects of collection (teddy bears, dolls, etc.) can function as transitional objects and ward off a confrontation with an early trauma of abandonment; the collected object is available and controllable. In more extreme cases, the collector withdraws from real objects and lives solely in the world of his or her collection. To collect and handle particular objects can then become like a drug that replaces any real object relationship: the collected object cannot disappoint, humiliate, or frighten its possessor. However, ultimately, the object of collection remains a thing, not a person, and thus the act of collecting it may repeat the traumatic unrelatedness of the original object of the subject's childhood. Finally, a collection can also be used to enact fantasies of oedipal rivalry and narcissistic exhibitionism.

The author emphasizes that collections are interesting to analyze and reveal important functions in the psychic economy of a patient who is a devoted collector.

Autistic Mindblindness: Cognitivism, Phenomenology, and Psychoanalysis. Michael Turnheim, pp. 707-735.

According to cognitive theory, the symptoms of autism are determined by an inability to make correct inferences concerning the thoughts of others. Without denying the existence of this so-called *mindblindness*, Turnheim doubts that this is an isolated phenomenon. Instead, he advances the thesis that autistic individuals experience as strange what normal individuals experience as their own. He wants to understand how the elimination of the strange within oneself comes about in normal persons, since these processes seem to fail in the development of autistic personalities.

Feeling unprotected against the bombardment of the strange, the autistic individual withdraws and becomes encapsulated.

Drawing on Meltzer's writing, the author notes that autism is characterized by only minimal persecutory anxieties; the level of aggression is very low, and the autistic person's efforts to fuse with others (adhesive identification) are based on a total lack of projective identification, which leads to a lack of differentiation between inside and outside—including the attribute of *being* inside or outside. There are only two-dimensional objects without any inside. Thus, the other is viewed as part of the autistic individual and is expected to react accordingly (which creates a combination of dependency and omnipotence).

A first theory of mind comes about when the infant projects what feels strange and bad in him-/herself into another object and then feels persecuted by this object, Turnheim notes. The split between good and bad is seen as a precondition of heterogeneity. In autism, this split does not seem to be effected, and there is a lack of feeling persecuted. This means that what is strange cannot be located elsewhere, but is all-present.

Referring to Husserl, Derrida, and Tustin, the author focuses on "self-affection," which requires the imagining of hetero-affection (e.g., masturbation requires the imagination of a third). However, the autistic individual, lacking the mechanisms of projection (as in the paranoid-schizoid position), cannot reintegrate the projected (as is the task in the depressive position). Therefore, there is no reintegration of what has been identified as strange; instead, there are efforts to expand and draw splinters of the enigmatic strange into a "hiding-place" (neither "I" nor "not-I"). This results in an omnipresence of the strange. The incapacity to extinguish heterogeneity in self-affection leads to the hopeless and continuously failing effort to establish unity (the self), causing the individual to experience the permanent intrusion of heterogeneity.

Edith Jacobssohn: *The German Years (1897–1938)*. Michael Schröter, Elke Mühlleitner, and Ulrike May, pp. 544–560.

There has been little research into the early years of Edith Jacobson, before her immigration to the United States—her origins,

her career, and the details of her political commitment during the Nazi era. The authors, having done extensive research in the relevant archives, provide an interesting synopsis of her personal development in relation to her first (presented and/or published) papers, which have never been translated into English, and give a compelling inside view of what guided her interests in her famous later writings.

Edith Jacobson was born in 1897 in Haynau (now in Poland). Her father was a general physician who was wounded in the First World War and suffered from a severe depression thereafter; he died in 1927. Edith had a better relationship with him than with her mother; she felt she identified with her father's superego, and related her interest in depression to his postwar breakdown. Edith had a brother, Erich, two years her senior, who became a pediatrician and also immigrated to the United States.

As a youngster, Edith was her school's best student in mathematics. She then studied medicine in Jena, in Heidelberg (where she first heard lectures on Freud's psychoanalysis in 1919), and in Munich, and then specialized in psychiatry. In 1925, she went to the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute for training. Asked by Sándor Rado in her initial interview why she wanted to become a psychoanalyst, she said, "Because I am so curious"—an answer that was considered satisfactory. She much appreciated Rado as a teacher and stayed in friendly contact with him, even after he had departed from mainstream analysis. Her father paid for her training analysis with Otto Fenichel. She participated in seminars on child analysis, taught by Fenichel, Schultz-Hencke, and occasionally by Anna Freud; Jacobson was also open to Klein's ideas.

After four years of training, she graduated in 1930, with a child analytic case focused on the development of the superego. Jacobson's formulation of this case suggested the possibility of a double or split superego (in particular, in asocial personalities), one part of which repressed the other, allowing drive satisfaction. With the publication of Freud's introduction to *The Ego and the Id* (1923), her interest had shifted from drive theory to structure theory, with a particular focus on the superego and depressive states. Her

practice flourished and included patients from all social backgrounds; she also worked as a consultant for sexual problems.

Jacobson, who had always been focused on science, became politically engaged in the resistance against the Nazi movement only because she had read Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and understood the danger that the Nazis posed for Jews and the political left. She joined a group of Marxists within the International Psychoanalytical Association, working toward a connection between psychoanalysis and Marxism (applied to education, sociology, and history), and criticized analysts who neglected the influence of biological and social factors on psychic development. In this context, Jacobson disputed the notion of *primary masochism* because it emphasized a human predilection to suffer, as opposed to the wish to change depriving social conditions.

When most of her Jewish colleagues left Berlin in 1933, Jacobson decided to stay. She gave a paper in 1933 on the little girl's wish for a baby, questioning some of Freud's ideas and agreeing with Klein's emphasis on oral sadistic fantasies, anxieties, and impulses for reparation. Later, she continued to teach unofficially in the Berlin Institute and continued to travel abroad to congresses. During these years, she financially supported a resistance group, "New Beginning," allowing it to have gatherings at her apartment, and treated two of its members (even though the Berlin Institute did not allow the treatment of Communists).

In 1935, several members of New Beginning were arrested. One patient of Jacobson suicided for fear of torture should she refuse to betray the names of her political companions. Jacobson fled to Denmark. However, there she felt lonely and miserable, and, despite being warned by her patients, she returned to Berlin the same year, where she was immediately arrested. Her arrest caused a wave of shock and solidarity in one part of the Berlin Institute; Fenichel coordinated efforts to support and help her. However, others—including Anna Freud—blamed Jacobson for having endangered her colleagues and the field of psychoanalysis with her political activities.

Interrogated by the Nazis, Jacobson insisted on her obligation of confidentiality. She was sentenced to two and one-quarter years of prison. In prison, she continued to work, fully concentrated on psychoanalytic papers—one of which tackled the subject of paranoia and utilized Hitler's speeches as material. Another paper, on the development of the female superego, was read by Fenichel as an anonymous contribution at the IPA congress in 1936.

Then, still in prison, Jacobson fell very ill with diabetes and a reactive malfunction of her thyroids. She was sent to a Jewish Hospital in Leipzig, where she wrote a letter announcing her suicide, but she then fled with a friend, pianist Fritz Olbrich, to Prague, where she underwent thyroid surgery. Finally, she immigrated to New York on October 9, 1938.

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The Masturbatory Position and the Exclusion of Seduction: A Situation-Theoretical Concept and Its Technical Consequences.
Thomas Stark, pp. 1-33.

Departing from Freud's distinction between *actual neuroses*, characterized by psychic inadequacy and masturbation, and *neuro-psychoses of defense*, with their appropriate psychic activity and psychic mechanisms of defense, the author investigates a particular kind of adult patient whose major sexual activity is masturbation. These patients usually come to analysis with a broad spectrum of depressive, anxious and inhibited, and sometimes addictive symptoms. They complain about a dissatisfactory life—and soon enough the analysis itself becomes dissatisfying, at least for the analyst, as it runs into a standstill. The hours are impressive for their flatness, and the analysand cannot make creative use of the analyst's interventions; soon everything seems to have been said, but nothing has changed.

Particularly noticeable is that there are few signs of anxiety or curiosity expressed by the patient in sessions, and there is a lack of seduction and responsiveness to seduction in the lives of these pa-

tients. In fact, such analysands avoid talking about anything sexual; they cannot gain pleasure from masturbation, but merely seek relief. Equally, they avoid addressing the analyst as a person.

Stark became interested in what these analysands experienced immediately before the session and when greeting the analyst. He noted that they never elaborated those moments. It turned out that “situation 1”—that of anticipation of the analyst—was experienced by these patients as an unbearable “too muchness” of excitation and desire, disappointment and offense. These patients were incapable of elaborating a psychoanalytic microworld in talking with the analyst about such inner experiences; instead they regulated this overexcitation by concretely “out-regulating” the analyst once they got to “situation 2”—actually being in the session with the analyst.

From the point of view of the analyst, in situation 1 (when the patient anticipates the analyst), the drives are stirred up; in situation 2 (when they get together), the analyst has to help the patient elaborate the drive, which turns the previous masturbatory regulation into a sexual transference.

Basing himself on the theory of mind and the regulation theory proposed by Peter Fonagy and Mary Target, as well as by Ulrich Moser and Ilka Zeppelin, the author describes the masturbatory position as conceived out of the concretistic regulation of a seduction situation in the analysis. Helping the patient to do psychic work on the drives can reintroduce a sense of subjective time, the sexual object, and psychic reality.

Chronification of Depression: An Indication for Psychoanalysis and Long-Term Psychoanalytic Treatment. Marianne Leuzinger-Bohleber, pp. 789-815.

According to the World Health Organization, 300,000,000 people suffer from depression, and by 2020, depression will be the second most common disease. Already, statistics indicate that half of all people who go through a first episode of depression will experience a second episode. One-half of all patients diagnosed

with Major Depressive Disorder become chronic; 20% do not react to antidepressant medication, and another 20% experience only short-term relief from it. Relapse rates following all forms of short-term therapy are high.

The German Psychoanalytic Association (Sigmund-Freud-Institute in Frankfurt) undertook an outcome study on long-term psychoanalytic treatment with chronically depressed patients; the results suggest that psychoanalysis or long-term psychoanalytic psychotherapy is the therapy of choice. Eighty percent of previously depressed patients (who also suffered from severe personality disorders, anxious neurotic symptoms, or psychosomatic symptoms) showed stable improvement of their depressive symptoms, their enjoyment of life, their work, and their personal relationships following long-term psychoanalytic therapy.

Similar results have been reported from a prospective study in Stockholm, Heidelberg, and Munich: the higher the frequency of sessions, the more stable the results of treatment. Results like these seem to indicate that high-frequency, long-term treatments lead to better and longer-lasting results than low-frequency, psychodynamic, short-term therapies.

Psychoanalytic views of depression describe developmental failure caused by conflicts and unconscious fantasies, contributing to an unrealistic sense of self and identity, as well as to the incapacity to engage in and maintain mutually satisfying object relationships. The complexity of individual and transgenerational determinants of chronic depression itself suggests that short cognitive-behavioral therapies cannot effect fundamental change of the multilayered unconscious determinants of depression.

Referring to the relevant literature, including studies in neurobiology, Stark concludes that the desired changes are not merely cognitive. Since memory is a function of the whole organism and involves embodied (senso-motoric-affective) processes, structural changes require the slow, high-frequency, and thorough process of working through unconscious conflicts and fantasies and early memories, within a transference relationship. Changes in living organisms need time, and so do changes in psychotherapy.

The Psychodynamics of Severe Depression and the Therapeutic Consequences. Frank Matakas and Elisabeth Rohrbach, pp. 892-917.

On the basis of observations of depressive patients in a hospital setting, Matakas and Rohrbach critically review existing theories and offer a revised psychoanalytic understanding of depression, leading to some suggestions for treatment. Depression is characterized by self-devaluation, self-accusations, and a self-centered preoccupation, they note; the patient's complaints often lead the surrounding objects to offer help. Even though the help is rejected as useless, the relationship to the object is maintained. However, clinical studies show that, if patients are separated for some weeks from all family and friends, they get better. Thus, it seems that depression is not only *caused*, but also *maintained*, by a specific object relationship—contradicting the general assumption that depression is caused by the loss of an object.

Instead, the authors suggest that the trigger mechanism for depression is a conflict in the relationship, and that the depression defends against dealing with this conflict. However, the conflict need not be related to aggression, and depression cannot be understood generally as a defense against aggression or as an inward-directed aggression. To put it differently: depression is not a defense against aggression; rather, aggression is a defense against depression.

Matakas and Rohrbach state that a psychic conflict results in an organic inhibition (loss of vitality or libido, hormonal changes, vegetative symptoms) that expresses itself in depressive symptoms. They understand the depressive inhibition as a regression to a lower (earlier) functional level. Clinical work shows that allowing depressive patients to function on a regressive level (as the inpatient situation permits) usually leads to a relief of their depressive symptoms (one study showed that the rate of suicide dropped from 5% to 1% in a regression-permissive setting). The depressive inhibition can be seen as a protective measure that should not be questioned. Consequently, when treating depression, the authors

first offer their patients the possibility to regress “as long as they need it,” and only when the symptoms have cleared up do they start psychotherapeutic work on underlying conflicts.

The authors also state that it is not the loss of the object as such, but rather the loss of the object’s narcissistic support that causes depression. Depression is an “emergency break” when unfulfilled wishes interfere with or cannot be integrated with an object relationship that provides narcissistic support. The patient then withdraws to a regressive functional level, where these wishes do not matter. Thus, the conflict that causes depression is a “failure” in the narcissistic object relationship; the patient experiences loss of support as his or her own incapability. Depressive complaints therefore stem from two factors: the initiating conflict that caused the inhibition, and the feeling of helplessness that results from the inhibition.

Slightly modifying Freud’s famous statement, Matakas and Rohrbach suggest that the loss of the object’s support is experienced as a loss of the subject’s ego capacities. Aggression usually comes up when the patient can begin to be more aware of his/her needs; then the object is attacked for its failures.

In a final typology of depression, the authors offer the following categorical definitions: (1) *Endogenous depressions* are those in which the patient is dependent on a supportive object in a very basic way; the relationship itself is the conflict. (2) *Neurotic depressions* result from a contingent relational conflict; there is merely a “mistake” in the relationship. (3) *Reactive depressions* are regressions in search of a supportive object, when unusual circumstances momentarily surmount the individual’s capacity to cope with them and integrate the related demands. (4) *Chronic depressions* can result when patients remain in a regressive state because the working through of their relational conflicts would result in a loss that seems unacceptable to them. Psychopharmacological treatment helps only in the same sense that the permission of regression does: it gives relief and calms down the patient, but does not eliminate the reasons for the depression.

“It’s Not You I Have Lost, But the World”: Passion and Obsession in Suicidal Women. Benigna Gerisch, pp. 918-943.

Women make twice as many suicide attempts and suffer much more from depression than men. Utilizing an extensive clinical example from her work at a clinical center for suicidal patients, the author tries to understand the connections between femininity, passion, and suicidal inclinations, and develops some thoughts about a gender-specific deficit in women’s capacity to form symbols that help transform the absence of the love object into its symbolic presence.

The author does not focus on early-traumatized patients, who develop an object hunger that is perpetually frustrated in traumatic reenactments; rather, she is interested in patients who are intelligent, attractive, passionate, successful, and socially integrated, and who experience at a certain point in their lives a relationship between passion and craziness that brings them close to committing suicide. Here it seems that suicide does not aim at the murder of an introject, but at the preservation, change, and safety of an object.

The patient discussed was a professional woman who, during a research trip, had engaged in a sexual liaison with a married man. The relationship was extraordinarily passionate, but ended abruptly when this man disappeared without explanation. When the patient first saw the analyst, she stated that she could not live without this man. After he had left her out of the blue, she had tried all the ways she could to get in contact with him; she could not sleep and was totally dependent on her cellular phone, waiting to hear from him by day and by night. In this state of helplessness, she had committed her first suicide attempt, hoping to force him to come back to her by doing so.

The analyst, who had first felt like comforting and taking care of the patient in her desolate state, soon felt dragged into the patient’s obsessive talking, which she understood as the expression of a transference fantasy of *in-separateness*. While the patient felt she

needed to tell her analyst every detail, she also felt empty after each session, insatiate and miserable. These dynamics revealed a paradoxical relationship between the patient's depressive mother and the patient herself as a little child: a closeness of bodily contact combined with the mental unavailability of the mother. Physical contact and sexuality became an embodied metaphor for a necessary object relationship. The patient's lover's absence was his permanent presence in her; all her thinking, feeling, and dreaming was about him. In falling asleep and waking up, her mind circled around him, and she reacted with shock and fear when she happened for a moment to not think of him, which felt like losing herself.

The analyst understood the patient's suicidal and obsessional thoughts as the result of a reduced or imploded process of symbolization and representation. In this article, she suggests that, in female development, a conflict results from the fact that oral sadistic and preoedipal frustration and hatred, as well as aggression aimed at separation, is directed toward the very love object that is essential for the girl's identification. If these conflicts cannot be resolved, the intermediate space may be narrowed, with consequences for the process of symbolization.

Furthermore, Gerisch suggests that in mother-daughter relationships, the body often is and remains the intersubjective locus of sensual and conflictual experiences. Thus, suicide often derives from an unconscious wish to communicate and be heard in what cannot be said. This patient's fantasies of suicide included the death of the body, but not the death of her mind and self; in her suicidal fantasies, her body became the stage of an unconscious drama, and her excitement represented the *presence* as well as the *absence* of the lost lover. However, the longing of the insatiable body for this lover threatened her psychic equilibrium and was experienced as a loss of the patient's self; thus, the fantasy of extinguishing this worried body—representing her dependent, needy, clinging self—was understood as a way to resolve her conflicts and avoid total disintegration.

Personality Organization, Perversion, and Sexual Delinquency.

Fritz Lackinger, pp. 1106-1130.

The author reevaluates the concept of perversion in the context of a general theory of personality. Perversions can have a dissociated status within a neurotic personality organization, but they can also affect the whole personality in borderline patients, where sexual perversions are ego-syntonic. Constitutional conditions, as well as early trauma, result in oral and anal conflicts, leading to the prevalence of aggressive over libidinal strivings and preventing a normal oedipal triangulation. A lack of differentiation between self and object, as well as difficulties of separation from the primary object, creates the agoraphobic-claustrophobic dilemma of the perverse individual, who develops on the one hand an unusually strong longing for closeness and being one with the object, and, on the other hand, an avoidance of closeness because of annihilation and engulfment anxieties.

In consequence of annihilation anxiety, the perverse person turns his or her pregenital aggression against the object. However, this is followed by fears of abandonment and consequent exposure to death by starvation. Thus, he or she needs a relationship in order to escape the fear of loneliness; yet in this relationship, the perverse individual must avoid real intimacy in order not to be swallowed. Via sexualization of oral and anal partial objects, he or she tries to compromise, triumphantly reversing previously unconscious anxieties, resulting in a primitive perception of reality.

Lackinger differentiates between various forms of perversion: benign perversions (fetishism and transvestism), transgressive perversions (voyeurism, exhibitionism, and frottage), and malign perversions (malign sadism, malign pedophilia, and the perversions of the rapist and child abuser). The extent to which the sexual integrity of others is attacked correlates roughly with the extent to which aggression is built into the level of personality organization.

With two case vignettes, the author shows that these different forms of perversions develop different transference resistances: character-neurotic and narcissistic resistances in the benign perversions, and increasingly paranoid and psychopathic resistances in malign perversions.

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