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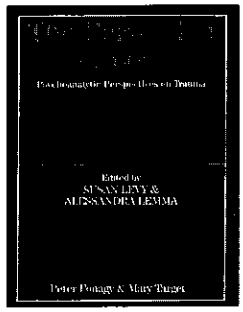


Edited by **Susan Levy**, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Ububele African Psychotherapy Centre, Johannesburg, and **Alessandra Lemma**, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Tavistock Clinic, and Psychoanalysis Unit, University College London

This book is an edited collection of psychoanalytic papers written by clinicians in the field of trauma. The papers examine the impact of trauma on psychic functioning. In particular, they focus on trauma as a perversion of loss and highlight how a collapse in the capacity to mourn transforms the nature of our attachments, of symbolic functioning and of our internal identifications.

This collection also contextualizes external traumatic events. The book emphasizes how traumatic experiences can undermine psychic resilience and can precipitate particular kinds of defensive organizations, not only internally, within individuals, but also externally within broader social and political frameworks.

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# Editorial

The main papers in this issue look at the relationship between art and imagination and the creative links with the analytic process. We begin with James Fisher's paper, 'Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind: the death and rebirth of imagination'. This is part of a new study on the imagination in which he gives our capacity to imagine centre stage in our mental activity. He suggests that 'imaging' is fundamental to our perception of both sense experience and emotional experience. He describes how patients and therapists alike can slip into a form of concrete thinking and thus action – a death of imagination – by failing to notice that whatever is said in the consulting room can be seen as an image of emotional experience. Dorothy Judd's paper, 'How a child represents the world through art', offers graphic evidence of the role that a child's creative images of both the internal and the external world play in communicating emotional experience. She discusses how a capacity for symbolization can develop in the interplay between the child and a mother who is receptive to the imagery. Graham Clarke's paper, 'An object-relations theory of creativity: Fairbairn's theory of art in the light of his mature model of mind', looks at Fairbairn's early theory of art in the light of his subsequent object relations theory, drawing particularly on John Padel's theory of psychic growth. He suggests that creativity and psychic growth are coeval and involve both the (Kleinian) restoration of the object and the (Winnicottian) reintegration of the selves.

In our Arts Review Section Arna Davis gives an account of the tragic life of the American artist, Eva Hesse, and the role her creativity, her 'psychic models', played in making order out of the chaos and emotional pain of her life and her impending death. Our new Classics Revisited Section continues with a discussion by Mary Adams of Donald Meltzer's 1966 paper, 'The relation of anal masturbation to projective identification'. She looks at the paper's focus on a specific kind of projective identification, a delusional, intrusive identification, involving the child's fantasied entry into the internal mother and how this can lead to a pseudo-maturity. For the Book Review Section we invited Juliet Newbigin to review the new *Israel Psychoanalytic Journal*. She highlights the

way the journal's first issue signals its recognition of the problems of entrenched mental attitudes in a situation of armed conflict. By addressing an international audience, the journal, she says, conveys the wish to facilitate a creative exchange between people where there are intense feelings of injustice and oppression on all sides and dialogue can feel to some like taking sides.

*The Editors*

# 'Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind'*: The death and rebirth of imagination

JAMES V. FISHER

## ABSTRACT

*In this paper the author begins to explore an understanding of imagination that sees it functioning in all perception. Related to this he suggests that one dilemma we see in intimate relationships as well as in the analytic process is a failure to recognize this presence of imagination. This results in what can be thought of as a kind of 'concrete thinking' where, instead of images, picture and stories that lead to thinking, we have images, pictures and stories that are experienced as 'facts' which demand action not thinking. Shakespeare's* A Midsummer Night's Dream *helps us to imagine this 'concrete thinking' as a death of imagination and invites us to wonder about a rebirth of imagination.*

**Key words** *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, alpha function, Bion, concrete thinking, falling in love, fancying, fantasy, imagination, imaging emotional experience, reality testing

## Introduction

My curiosity about the role and function of imagination was sparked by seeing patients, both individuals and couples, who would say with particular intensity, 'I just can't imagine it'. Of course this is a common way of conveying shock and disbelief. Nevertheless I became intrigued, wondering whether 'being able to imagine' might be in some way crucial to thinking and understanding. Consider this brief vignette from a session of analytic therapy with a couple I will call 'Mr and Mrs A':

---

*A *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1.1.234

This is a version of a paper given as the Enid Balint Memorial Lecture at the Tavistock Marital Studies Institute, 19 March 2004.

James Fisher is a member of the Psychoanalytic Section of the British Association of Psychotherapists and works in private practice.

> They had come because an ambiguously wanted pregnancy had brought a long-term simmering crisis to a head. In this particular session she was sitting perched on the edge of her chair, both as an expression of her angry agitation and in an attempt to balance herself with this baby inside which was due that week.
>
> 'I can't imagine what he's thinking,' she said as she told me about waking at midnight when she heard their first child coughing. She went looking for him to help, but found him asleep in a chair, 'comatose'. 'I'm just trying to find out what the reality is, the reality of how much he is drinking. I just want him to get real with me.'
>
> He agreed that that evening at dinner he had had a few glasses too many. His mood was a hard-to-read mixture of remorse, anger and emotional blankness. He said something about a glass of wine as a source of comfort and being reluctant to give it up, although now he was stopping altogether. She responded in dismay that he needed to get real.

Although it is possible that she was trying to imagine what he was thinking, it sounded more as if she was sure that he was not thinking; not thinking about her or this baby. As she put it, she did not have the luxury of trying to imagine what he was thinking. He, too, felt that he didn't need to try to imagine what she was feeling and he was sure he had meant to enjoy only a glass or two of wine with dinner. In this despairing scene there seemed to be no need, indeed no room, for each to try to imagine the emotional reality of the other – what the other might be feeling.

Scenes such as this might be thought of as 'the death of imagination'. By using an expression like this it might be assumed that I am referring to an *absence* of imagination. However, I want to suggest that, paradoxically, it is not an *absence* but an unrecognized *presence* of imagination that plagues this couple in crisis and many of the patients we see. This *not noticing* the presence of imagination means that there are only competing 'facts' which call for adjudication and action, not thinking. And in subtle ways we as therapists can be drawn into these competing 'realities', bypassing the imagining dimension, and thus finding ourselves experiencing a 'death of imagination'.

In what follows I begin to explore a view that sees imagination as fundamental to all perception and consequently as essential for thinking. It is part of a larger project and raises more questions than can be addressed here. I am returning to an understanding of the role of imagination articulated primarily by David Hume and Immanuel Kant. I am thus ascribing to imagination a wider role than we ordinarily recognize, as when the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines imagination as 'a mental concept of what is not actually present to the senses'. That is, I want to think about imagination as functioning importantly in the perception of something present to the senses.

Because this is a complex topic I am in this paper simply inviting you to try to imagine seeing imagination at work in all perception, in our seeing, hearing, feeling and so on. Perhaps it will feel like less of a leap of imagination as we turn to Shakespeare and the delightful images of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – including, of course, Bottom, the weaver and actor, 'translated' with the head of an ass, and Titania, who has fallen in love with him. The painting by Henry Fuseli reproduced

here (Figure 1) may be another aid in this imaginative exercise. From Shakespeare we turn to some familiar images highlighted by Bion before we consider how these descriptions of the role of imagination lead us to a disturbing picture of a kind of 'concrete thinking' that I am calling the 'death of imagination'.

## Blind Cupid

Where better to begin this exploration than in the company of that master of observation who was also intrigued with the role that imagination plays in human experience? You might say that Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one of our culture's defining explorations of imagination. Certainly we find in it one of the best-known and most often cited pictures of the role of imagination:

> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name. (5.1.14–17)

Figure 1: Titania awakes, 1793–4 by Henry Fuseli. By permission of the Bridgeman Art Library.

Imagination here is seen as the capacity to embody or give form to things unknown. But what is this 'airy nothing' to which the poet gives shapes, a local habitation and a name? Is Shakespeare himself inviting us to picture imagination as that which gives shape to literally nothing, 'airy nothing'? Do we detect here a hint of scepticism about what is imagined?

These famous lines are spoken by Theseus, Duke of Athens, as he and his betrothed, Hippolyta, prepare to celebrate their wedding. This couple, who represent more or less the 'real world' of ordinary life in this play, have been listening to the four young lovers and their story of a strange night in which two young men, both in love with one of two young women, awake to find themselves now both in love with the other woman. Theseus' scepticism about imagination would have been reinforced had he and Hippolyta observed, as the audience just has, the amusing spectacle of another couple in which Titania, Queen of the Fairies, has mysteriously fallen in love with a human being, Bottom, a weaver and actor, although he is now sporting the head of an ass. It is of course the story of a midsummer night's dream in which a drop from the magical 'love-in-idleness' flower, placed on the eyelids of the unsuspecting, induces a kind of 'love at first sight'. Hippolyta observes that it is strange indeed what these lovers report. Theseus replies:

> More strange than true. I never may believe
> These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
> Lovers and madmen have such seething brains
> Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
> More than cool reason ever comprehends.
> The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
> Are of imagination all compact:
> One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;
> That is the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
> Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven; (5.1.2–13)

The lunatic, the lover and the poet – what makes them what they are? Imagination. With the lightest of touch Shakespeare, the poet, invites us to notice the role of imagination and its fate in the experiences of both lovers and lunatics. In this play the poet appends to the adventures of lovers a 'lamentably comic' picture of a lunatic play-within-a-play. Why? I want to suggest that Shakespeare, with uncanny insight, is linking a picture of the birth of imagination with a picture of the death of imagination. In the process he points us towards the rebirth of imagination.

Leaving the lunatic for a moment, let's begin with the lover. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a wedding play, probably commissioned to be performed at an actual wedding. It is a play about couples and an appropriate setting in which to wonder what it is that attracts one person to another. Which, of course, is just the question that torments Helena, beloved of Demetrius, or at least she was his

beloved until he fell under the spell of Hermia. It is Helena's angry, despairing cry that gives the title to this paper:

> Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
> And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind;
> Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste:
> Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste.
> And therefore is Love said to be a child,
> Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd. (1.1.234–239)

'Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind'? Shakespeare plays with us in the ambiguity about the eyes, seeing and imagining. Here Helena complains that her lover, Demetrius, cannot be using his eyes since, as there is nothing to choose between the two young men now in love with Hermia, there is also nothing between the two young women – except as we learn later Helena is taller and Hermia is darker. When the love-juice reverses the attraction and both young men are then in love with Helena, Hermia protests that *she* hasn't changed, 'I am as fair now as I was erewhile' (3.2.274).

Even today we have not lost the linguistic link between imagination and this 'falling in love' when we use the expression 'I fancy you'. As one commentator points out, 'In Shakespeare's mind, as passages in *The Merchant of Venice* (3.2.63–70) and *Twelfth Night* (1.1.14, 5.1.387) show, [fancy] could signify love prompted by fantasy, or under the sway of imagination' (Brooks, 1979: cxxxiii, note 5).

'Falling in love' is, one might say, a seizure of the imagination, of which Oberon's love-juice is a delightful picture. It brings to mind Enid Balint's suggestion that when you 'imaginatively perceive' someone it means that person is part of your fantasy life, conscious as well as unconscious (Balint, 1987). When Helena says that 'love looks not with the eyes but with the mind', Shakespeare is pointing out that what we see and hear and feel is shaped and formed and given a local habitation by the mind's conscious and unconscious fantasy.

Whatever we think about the experience of falling in love, or indeed falling out of love, the seeing, the hearing, the touching, even the smell and the taste of the loved object is a perceptual experience shaped by imagination. We might even say that we literally would be blind were it not for the mind's capacity to imagine.

Shakespeare makes it hard to miss the love-juice as an image of the falling in love role of imagination. Of course we do not literally believe in the efficacy of Oberon's love-juice, although we do notice that it is to be applied to the eyelids of one who is *sleeping*. That is, might it have something to do with the *efficacy* of fancying, of unconscious fantasy, of dreams? As Harold Brooks puts it, 'The magic power of the love-juice mirrors the compulsive nature, in real life, of such seizures of the imagination' (Brooks, 1979: cxxxiv).

When the four young lovers awake and try to piece together the story of the night, the one who wonders whether they are awake or asleep is, of course, the one who has fallen in love with one woman, and then with another, and then

again with the first – all with but *one* application of the 'love-juice'. Demetrius asks the others:

> . . . Are you sure
> That we are awake? It seems to me
> That yet we sleep, we dream. (4.1.191–193)

The strange thing is the power of dreams, the power of imagination. In the words of another commentator on this play, the 'realignments of love wrought by the dream-dramas of the night simply do not disappear at dawn' (Calderwood, 1965, cited in Brooks, 1979). Well, they do and they don't. The words of Prospero in *The Tempest* inevitably come to mind:

> . . . We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep. (*The Tempest* 4.1.156–158)

What if it were true? Is it possible that 'we are such stuff as imagination is made on'? *A Midsummer Night's Dream* not only helps us notice the role of imagination, it also raises for us inescapable questions about symbolism, illusion and reality.

**Imagination and perception**

Shakespeare's fated lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* illustrate how imagination shapes and influences perceptions to do with falling in love. He seems to believe that imagination is the capacity to give form to things unknown, to give to 'airy nothing' a shape, a local habitation and a name. But we should note that immediately after that often-quoted portion of Theseus' speech about imagination, Shakespeare has him go on to say:

> Such tricks hath strong imagination,
> That if it would but apprehend some joy,
> It comprehends some bringer of that joy:
> Or, in the night, imagining some fear,
> How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear! (5.1.18–22)

Here it is far from 'airy nothing' that is embodied, shaped, given a local habitation and a name. What is given shape and embodied are the emotions of fear and joy.

There is a theory of mind that can be traced in the western tradition from Hume and Kant, which gives an essential role to imagination in perception. Mary Warnock, in her helpful overview of the history of this concept, points out how even the 20th-century continental phenomenologists, who deny a link between perception and imagination, end up with a view of perception that involves mental activity beyond the simple registering of the stimuli affecting the senses. Warnock makes a strong case for describing perception as *thought-*

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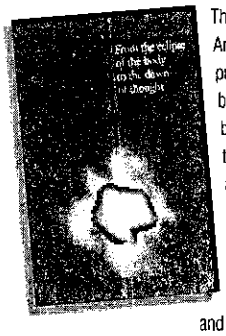
### The Eclipse of the Body, the Dawn of Thought
By Armando Ferrari



This is a collection of some of Armando B. Ferrari's writings published in Italy and in Brazil as books between 1992 and 1998. The book is closely related to the line of thought that starts with S. Freud and continues with K. Abraham, M. Klein and W.R. Bion, and it is the first attempt at creating a psychoanalytic model centred on the relationship between body and mind. The main hypothesis is that the body – long excluded from the field of psychoanalytic research – has a fundamental role in the birth, development and realisation of mental functions. The founding element of Ferrari's theoretical model is that the body is the one "object" of the mind as well as its primary reality, hence the notion of Concrete Original Object (COO), a notion which aims of introducing the body in the field of psychoanalytical theory and originates, as a result, a totally new and different understanding of the term "object". In this perspective the psychic object is understandably regarded as a concrete inevitable presence not as a pure imago representing an aspect of external reality. The object is not understood as Klein's symbol: it is a concrete object because it is the body we live in, and provides, furthermore, an insoluble paradox for it presents itself, at the same time, as the object (since we have a body) and as the subject (since we are our body). Ferrari therefore defines the mind as a function of the body and sees the nucleus of human experience in the relation between these two poles. The different implications originated by Ferrari's hypothesis, both on the theoretical and on the clinical ground, are discussed in detail in the book. On the theoretical level a substantial expansion of the Oedipus complex, a revision of the concept of Ego and the presentation of new theoretical models such as the contact net conveying the notion that the roots of thinking, even the most sophisticated thinking, are in the experience of the body. On the technical level tools such as the analytic proposition and language registers provide new perspectives to clinical work with patients with severe psychotic disorders. The book ends with clinical specific examples of work with adolescents as adolescence is an age in which the body-mind relationship reaches levels of utmost tension.

**Armando Bianco Ferrari is Training Analyst of the Brazilian Psychoanalytic Association of São Paulo and Full Member of the International Psychoanalytic Association and of the Italian Psychoanalytic Association. He lived in Brazil until 1976 when he moved to Italy**

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### Women without a Shadow
By Silvia Tubert

The recent and rapid development of reproductive technologies has brought into question many concepts at the heart of our culture, such as human reproduction, motherhood and fatherhood. Such concepts are themselves theoretical constructions, posing as descriptions of natural, functions. But they are now increasingly linked to a medicalization of the human body, and of the life, sexuality and desire of people, especially of women. All this requires that we think critically about our biological and cultural inheritance, and the psychological and ethical implications of the new technologies.

In this book Silvia Tubert locates reproductive technologies in the historical context of the progressive technification of the management of human life. Their relation to social and medical discourses on femininity, maternity and infertility is rigorously analysed. Culture and its discontents, violence, and domination, are related intimately to the problematic character of sexuality, which includes the uncertainties of our desires. Social, medical, anthropological and literary discourses try to define maternal desire, in order to control it. But psychoanalysis shows that we face here an impossible question. The enunciated demand,, what is said about one's own desire (I want a child,) is one thing. A very different one is the unconscious desire which disturbs the conscious discourse and shows that there can be psychological obstacles that interfere with the accomplishment of conscious wishes. Conflicts and contradictions emerge from women's words.

This original and provocative book confronts a discourses arising from psychoanalysis, medicine, journalism, ethnology, mythology and literature, and vitally moves on the argument in relation to all of them.

**Silvia Tubert – has written widely on femininity, feminine sexuality and maternity, articulating the psychoanalytic theory with anthropologic, literary and feminist discourses.**

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### Skin Disease – a treatise from a Jungian perspective of psychosomatic dermatology
by A Maguire

The last fifty years has encompassed unparalleled development in the world of scientific medical research. Yet, still the causation of many diseases eludes consciousness. Nowhere is this more apparent, than in the sometimes neglected, discipline of dermatology. In which, a scientific basis for causation and treatment is offered to very few diseases of the skin. In fact the aetiology, the cause, is unknown in the vast majority.

Consciousness is mankind,s most precious attribute. Without it, unconsciousness reigns. Itself, consciousness is the light which born from the unconscious is able to direct itself outwards to the world, and inwards to the realm of the unconscious psyche. By becoming conscious one can comprehend fully all that which is not. This work is an exploration of the unconscious psychic background of acute, but mainly chronic skin diseases. It is a study, which includes both the personal unconscious of each individual and the vast archetypal world with its communication by image and symbol, which is named the collective unconscious or objective psyche.

Its reality was established 100 years ago by C.G. Jung's early work with the galvanometer and the word association test, through the medium of the skin. He was to describe psyche, including consciousness and the unconscious realm, as the greatest of all cosmic wonders. His concept of the human soul included this totality of psyche.

The development of the field of biofeedback later in the last century revealed the extraordinary ability of the skin to reflect the inner life of psyche. In this psychological exploration of each individual troubled by problems of the skin, a wide variety of psychic emotional disturbances was uncovered in the course of the study. It also became apparent that the skin is a paramount psychic reflector in a singularly graphic way in many instances. The conscious recognition of these hidden disturbances and the acceptance by the individual proved to be the key factor in the study. This realisation with its inherent meaning, usually brought amelioration of symptoms and often a resolution of the ailment. The skin disease in such cases is a message from the soul itself.

**Dr. Anne Maguire is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and is both a Specialist Dermatologist, trained in London and Paris, and an Analytical Psychologist, trained at the C. G. Jung Institute, Zürich. She lectures widely and is in private practice in London.**

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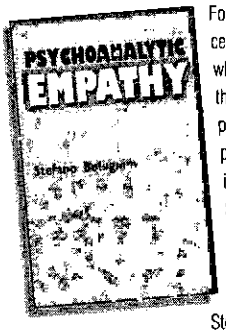
### Psychoanalytic Empathy
By Stefano Bolognini




For the psychoanalyst, there exist certain rare and special moments when emotion, imagination and thought combine to enable both patient and analyst to reach a profound understanding of what is happening between them. Such subjective, relational and clinical experiences are perhaps as rare as they are unforgettable. Over the past twenty years, Stefano Bolognini has concerned himself with empathy, one of the most significant, yet hotly debated and difficult to define concepts in the recent history of psychoanalysis. In this book, the author traces the philosophical origins of empathy and its development, with Freud and the first psychoanalysts, up to its re-discovery, in the 1950s, in parallel with changing views on countertransference. Dr Bolognini then offers his observations which take us to the very heart of psychoanalysis, maintaining all the fecundity of the issues discussed while illustrating the real complexity of the empathic experience, the privileged transformative goal of the relationship between patient and analyst. All in all, an original and valuable contribution to psychoanalytic theory.

**Stefano Bolognini, is a training and supervising psychoanalyst of the Italian Psychoanalytic Society. At present he is the European representative for the Board of the International Psychoanalytic Association and a member of the European Board of the International Journal of Psychoanalysis. Author and co-author of many works, he recently published Come vento, come onda, a collection of amusingly-told personal anecdotes each with its concluding pearl of psychoanalytic wisdom. He lives and works in Bologna, Italy.**

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### Critical Psychiatry
Edited by David Ingleby

'Critical Psychiatry', edited by David Ingleby, was first published in 1980. Its seven essays were strongly influenced by the debates over psychiatry which had raged in the 1960's and 1970's. While some details in the book have inevitably become dated, its basic theme – the contrast between the size of the problem of mental illness, and the inadequacy of responses to it – seems even more relevant now than a quarter century ago. Today, diagnoses of mental illness have reached staggering levels: the WHO has estimated that depression will become the second most important cause of disability worldwide by 2020, and the major cause in the developed world. Yet psychiatry is increasingly dominated by crudely reductionist biomedical models and a one-sided reliance on drug treatments. Theoretical perspectives which present a challenge to the mainstream are marginalized, while standardised treatment protocols and diagnostic manuals have suppressed the diversity of approaches which characterised the field thirty years ago. This book makes a strong plea for critical thinking about the conceptual foundations of psychiatry, about its social role, and about the issues of power surrounding mental illness. Far from being merely an historical document, 'Critical Psychiatry' is powerfully relevant to mental health services today.

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## Freud and the Post-Freudians

### By J A C Brown

In this classic work, originally published in 1961, James Brown provides a compelling account of both Freud's original ideas and of the subsequent developments that arose out of them. He explains in an engaging yet informed manner the basic concepts of psychoanalytic theory, including a survey of the contribution of Freud's contemporaries. The ideas of the early schismatics – Carl Jung, Otto Rank, Alfred Adler, and Wilhelm Stekel – are explored, as are those of the various British schools – including the work of William Rivers, Ian Suttie, Melanie Klein and Ronald Fairbairn. Particular attention is given to the so-called neo-Freudians, with chapters on Karen Horney, Erich Fromm and Harry Stack Sullivan, amongst others.

Psychoanalysis is frequently used as a catch-all term to describe the many schools of thought which take their origin from the work of Freud – however much they now diverge from it. For those seeking a more informed exposition of the basic concepts of psychoanalysis and its subsequent developments Freud and the post-Freudians provides the ideal introduction.

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## Making Death Thinkable

### By Franco De Masi

Man's perception of the finite nature of life is always present, resulting in anxieties of varying intensity, depending on the person,s character and on the phases of life he is going through. De Masi is aware of the philosophical, sociological, religious or mystical approaches to the problem of death, however he chooses to focus on, and remain within, the theoretical frame of reference of psychoanalysis. He explores how different psychoanalytic theories have addressed the issue of death, its presence or absence in the unconscious, as well as the implications of the theories of the death instinct on a more strictly clinical and technical level. Moreover De Masi is interested in thinking about the psychological resources available to man, to make death thinkable, when its inevitable occurrence needs to be faced. He is concerned with the transformation of the thought of death, from an unthinkable catastrophic event, to a natural conclusion of one,s existence. As a psychoanalyst, he explores the quality of the anxiety accompanying the idea of the natural occurrence of death, which, however, is a perturbing presence in the mind of the average man of our Western civilization. We might fear, sense and anticipate the death of our loved ones, and we know that when it occurs we will need to face the emptiness that will result. Yet, the emptiness we will leave proves to be unthinkable. What do we mean then by 'fear of death', what is death,s status in our mind, what is it that torments us? Most significantly, how can we conceptualise our fear of death from a psychoanalytic perspective?

**Franco De Masi is a training and supervising psychoanalyst of the Italian Psychoanalytic Society (SPI) where he is also the Secretary of Training.**

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## Harvesting Free Association

### By Marita Torsti-Hagman

This book is about the fundamentals of free association. Working from alarge amount of clinical material, it enables us to see how the problems of the symbolization process are created in the minds of both the analysand and the analyst.

Harvesting Free Association gives detailed attention to the phenomena of hysteria, obsessional neurosis, and the death drive. Marita Torsti-Hagman also investigates the symbolizations of femininity, including the kinds of psychosomatic disturbances that the child-bearing and nursing mother suffer from. Conceptualizing the central role of inner-genitality as a catalyst for the integration of femininity she analyses the conflicts penis envy produces when there is insufficient potential in the woman,s mind for binding it. This part of the book formulates a theory on the fundamental significance of hallucination during the foetal stage both for the formation of the deepest unconscious and for the functioning of primary repression. Marita Torsti-Hagman argues that drive is energy; and therefore that theory formation necessitates a language of charge and movement. In contemporary psychoanalysis it is no longer sufficient to be satisfied with the understanding of the content of representations.

The author has a long-standing interest in what psychoanalysis is, what Freud meant it to become and what it has been made into. The analyst's ability and inability to remain in touch with his own unconscious and to use it in his analytic work as an interpretative process, have been central foci of attention in the writing of this book.

**Marita Torsti-Hagman was born in Finland in 1935. She originally trained as a psychiatrist and has been practicing as a psychoanalyst for the last thirty years. She has been a member of the Finnish Psychoanalytic Association since 1982**

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## On The Freud Watch: Public Memoirs

### By Paul Roazen

This is a collection of personal pieces. The Introduction deals with Roazen's experiences attending clinical case conferences at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center in 1964-65, and what he learned about psychoanalytic psychology there. Chapter 1 makes a general statement about his outlook on why studying the past matters. Chapter 2 deals with a particular psychological explanation that his friend Charles Rycroft offered for why psychoanalysts are characteristically anti-historical. Chapter 3 discusses Roazen's take on the problem of Freud's analysis of his daughter Anna, a matter Roazen first brought to light in 1969. Chapter 4 deals with the rarely discussed question of training analyses. Chapter 5 contains Roazen's efforts to deal with the way the founder of the Freud Archives, Kurt Eissler, launched attacks on his work. Chapter 6 tries to show how Roazen thinks Dickens's David Copperfield can be an example of creative ablation in a great novelist's life. Chapter 7 discusses O'Neill's Long Day's Journey from the contrasting viewpoints of Freud and Jung, both of whom can be said to have directly influenced O'Neill. Chapter 8 consists of some 26 letters to the editor that Roazen published, including the circumstances and objectives he had with each. Chapter 9 covers his take on the recently published Freud correspondences with both Ferenczi and Abraham. Chapter 10 is an over-view of Freud's impact on political and social thought, embracing the traditions of socialism, conservatism, and liberalism. Chapter 11 includes Roazen's use of psychological thinking in order to follow questions connection with Canadian political life as he experienced it. Chapter 13 deals with Roazen's understanding of who has won and lost in the Freud Wars of this past century. And Chapter 14 concludes with a discussion of how he thinks Freud's concept of neurosis was intended to convey his understanding of a specifically human privilege. The short epilogue closes with a personal account of the significance of a small beach in Roazen's childhood.

**Paul Roazen, educated as a political theorist at Harvard, Chicago, and Oxford, has spent his career approaching psychoanalysis as an aspect of intellectual history. Issues of a moral and philosophic nature remain central to the tradition of thought that Freud initiated, and help account for the unfortunate sectarianism that has afflicted the field. On the Freud Watch: Public Memoirs opens and closes with autobiographical pieces, but the book as a whole reflects an intensely personal account of how Roazen became known as a 'controversial' figure within psychoanalysis.**

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*embued* and suggests that there is good reason to agree with Hume and Kant in calling this mental activity imagination (Warnock, 1976).

It helps to note Kant's comments on why the role of imagination in perception has not been given recognition:

> Psychologists have hitherto failed to realise that imagination is a necessary ingredient of perception itself. This is due partly to the fact that [imagination] has been limited to reproduction, partly to the belief that the senses not only supply impressions but also combine them so as to generate images of objects. (Kant, 1929: A120a)

When Kant refers to the reproductive function of imagination, he is talking about imagination in our ordinary use of the term where it is understood as the capacity to form an image in the absence of the object or when the object does not exist. When we look at the productive function of imagination, its constructive and organizing aspect, it is easier to imagine a view that sees imaging as a necessary part of perception. This view of perception as *thought-embued* is familiar when we look at experiences such as delusional perceptions or in work with couples where we are presented with two different, plausible and yet apparently mutually exclusive perceptions of the same occurrence.

In ordinary perception the work of imagination seems hidden and not available to us consciously. However, in crises or conflicts or in some forms of psychopathology we begin to notice the role of imagination in perception. Most importantly, the role of imagination in perception is made available to us by our artists. In a rather didactic way contemporary 'conceptual art' aims to make us aware that we are using our imagination in ordinary experiences – such as looking, for example, at an unmade bed.

## The developmental history of imagination

It is profoundly important for the human mind to be able to organize the stimuli bombarding the senses into mental images in order to cope with them – attending to some, disregarding others. This ability of the mind is to some degree part of the mind's natural endowment, a function of the structure of the brain. But it is also interpersonal, a function of relationships, during the prolonged dependency of childhood. It is not just a matter of attending to select stimuli but of *organizing* them into images that can be named, remembered and re-cognized.

This ability to imagine, which can be seen as having an affinity with what Bion describes by the abstract term 'alpha-function', is linked not just with perception but with our ability to become *unconscious* of some things:

> If there are only beta-elements [sense impressions] which cannot be made unconscious [by alpha-function], there can be no repression, suppression, or learning. This creates the impression that the patient is incapable of discrimination. He cannot be unaware of any single sensory stimulus: yet such hypersensitivity is not contact with reality. (Bion, 1962: 8)

Being flooded with sense impressions would not feel like an experience of being *in* touch with reality, but more like being *out* of touch with reality. This would be a hopeless madness, a picture of someone overwhelmed in a life of unrelenting, unorganized stimuli.

Because the term 'imagination' has so many associations Bion creates a new vocabulary, the language of 'alpha-function'. Although imagining and alpha-function are not identical, I am suggesting that they map similar territory. Bion's technical term for sense data or sense impressions is 'beta-element'. He also uses 'beta-element' to refer to 'sense impressions of emotions' prior to the operation of 'alpha-function' (Bion, 1962: 6, 26). His definition of 'alpha-function' and 'alpha-elements' makes clear the close links with the capacity to image:

> Alpha-function transforms sense impressions into alpha-elements which resemble, and may in fact be identical with, the visual images with which we are familiar in dreams ... . (Bion, 1962: 7)

> [Alpha-function] transforms sense data into alpha-elements. Alpha-elements comprise visual images, auditory patterns, olfactory patterns, and are suitable for employment in dream thoughts, unconscious waking thinking, dreams, contact-barrier, memory. (Bion, 1962: 26)

This is not the place to explore further Bion's complex analysis but I mention it here by way of acknowledging his influence on my account of the role of imagination.

As I said, in addition to the structure of the brain, which makes imaging possible, the interpersonal aspect of the development of this capacity for imagination is critical. A very familiar example of this is seen in the game 'This little piggy went to market', in which the mother images with and for her baby, making it possible for her baby to begin noticing what is important. It constitutes an on-going, lively and emotion-filled dance and dialogue between mother and baby. Now extend this picture to the uncountable images in the growth and development of the child, beginning from the simplest, through all the objects, events, emotions and narratives of childhood. Nor are we tempted to think that the creative imaging stops when we reach adulthood. When and how it does stop is the theme of this paper.

### Imaging our emotional experience

Bion finds himself agonizing over the puzzle that there seems to be no way to image emotion stimuli the way we image the stimuli affecting the five senses. He notes that we could look to somatic states as ways of imaging emotions, an idea that Freud had made familiar, but it doesn't get him very far.

> The senses may be able in a state of fear or rage to contribute data concerning the heart-beat, and similar events peripheral, as we see it, to an emotional state. But there are no sense-data directly related to psychic quality, as there are sense-data directly related to concrete objects. Hypochondriacal symptoms may therefore be signs of an attempt to establish contact with psychic quality by *substituting physical sensation* for the *missing sense data of psychical quality*. (Bion, 1962: 53; emphasis added)

Bion gets stuck because he is looking for a parallel to what happens when, in his language, alpha-function transforms not just sense data but emotion data into alpha-elements that can be used for dreaming and thinking:

> What deals with the counterparts of a sense impression of an emotional experience? How are these counterparts of a sense impression then transformed into alpha-elements? It is helpful to postulate sense impressions of an emotional experience analogous to sense impressions of concrete objects. If there are such impressions we shall have to consider whether the alpha-elements into which alpha-function transforms the sense impressions of an emotional experience differ from the alpha-elements into which alpha-function transforms the sense-data of a concrete object and if so in what the difference consists. (Bion, 1962: 55–56)

Bion cannot give a clear *theoretical* answer to the dilemma he raises. He actually does provide an answer, however, in his remarkably evocative picture of the process of imaging. That is, Bion shifts from the highly technical and theoretical language of alpha-function and beta-elements to the homeliest and warmest images of mothers and babies and what he came to call the container/contained relationship. Dividing what happens into imaging of physical sense data and the imaging of emotions is quite artificial. It calls to mind Wittgenstein saying 'the human body is the best picture of the human soul' (Wittgenstein, 1953: 178).

What I want to emphasize in Bion's picture of this dynamic relationship between mother and baby is the way the mother can take in fragments or 'projections' of the baby's experience and image them. Cries, grimaces, smiles and all the other ways the baby directs at or 'projects into' the mother something of what it is experiencing are provoked by sensations it cannot experience or, to use Bion's term, suffer. The baby is trying not to suffer. Mother, however, takes it as a communication, persisting in treating these 'expelled sensations' as communications. The mother's ability to imagine for the baby is part of a mysterious dynamic interaction in which the baby comes to form its own complementary images, images that are imbued with emotion.

## Concrete thinking and the death of imagination

I am suggesting that one can see *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as both a vivid picture of the birth of imagination and also a picture of the death of imagination, albeit a diabolically funny one.

We might ask what makes the madman mad and what is the link with imagination. There are several answers, but let's look at Shakespeare's. It is related to the phenomenon I discussed several years ago in a paper on *Macbeth* in which I talked about the proleptic imagination (Fisher, 2000). The Macbeths as a couple are a sombre picture of a state of mind in which what is imagined, proleptically imagined, seems somehow already to have happened. Here the play that Bottom and his fellow actors put on for the wedding celebration is a comic picture of an inability even to notice the distinction between an image and what it images.

Concrete thinking can be slapstick funny, but it can also be disturbing, as when Bion presents the spectre of a man who feels he must murder his parents in order to feel free from the anti-sexual internal parents (Bion, 1962: 6). In this play-within-a-play we have scenes reminiscent of the mythical redneck American southerner who jumps up on the stage to rescue poor Desdemona from the murderously jealous Othello. But here it is the actors who worry that the Lion will frighten the ladies unless Snug the joiner explains that it is *he* who *is* the Lion – or is it the Lion that says he is really Snug?

It only gets worse when Moonshine points to the lantern he is carrying and tells the audience that it *presents* the horned moon, and he himself '*the Man i' th' Moon do seem to be*'. When the audience tease cruelly that this is wrong, that he should be *in* the lantern if he is indeed the Man *in* the Moon, he responds desperately:

> All that I have to say is, to tell you that the
> lantern is the moon; I the Man i'th' Moon; this
> thorn-bush my thorn-bush; and this dog my dog. (5.1.247–249)

A bush, a thorn-bush or a bear? What is symbol? What is illusion? What is reality? In concrete thinking the symbol and what is symbolized are seen as identical. This 'concrete thinking' is related to what Hanna Segal called 'symbolic equation' (Segal, 1981). I want to suggest that we can think of concrete thinking not as a *lack* of imagination, but as the failure to notice the presence of imagination and thus a failure to recognize any distinction between the image and what it images.

The invitation of the poet is to enter imaginatively into the images, not literally as happens in the Woody Allen film *The Purple Rose of Cairo*. We don't jump on the stage to rescue Desdemona no matter how moved we are by her plight. To ask of a dream or a poem or a children's play whether the story, the account, the images are real is a misunderstanding. Images have their domain – in perception, in dreams, in unconscious fantasy, in theatre, in play and make-believe; in fact at the basis of all thinking. The appropriate question to ask about an image is not, 'is it real?', but 'what does the image organize?' And 'how well does it organize it?' Being able to distinguish between the image and what it images, to ask how well it organizes what it aims to organize, is the beginning of reality-testing. The thorn-bush looks to be a bear but, on closer inspection,

the visual and other sense data are better organized by the idea, the image, of a bush. We can also ask how well it organizes complex emotional experiences.

### Concrete thinking versus reality testing

To return to our couple at the beginning, Mrs A's – or our – taking Mr A's account of his 'liking a glass of wine with dinner' simply as a description of his failure to recognize his difficulty with alcohol could be a kind of concrete thinking. Is it just an account of what happened, what he drank and what implications that had, or could it also be a picture of his emotional experience? This way of thinking about concrete thinking has links with what I have elsewhere referred to as 'the session as a dream' and stories as 'pictorialized communications of emotional experiences' (Fisher 1999, 2001, 2002). Of course, in our work with patients we can only invite them out of their concrete thinking if we ourselves are able to notice it and resist their unconscious efforts to draw us on to the stage with them.

Concrete thinking can sometimes feel all but irresistible. For example, the reality of Mr and Mrs A's crisis threatened almost irresistibly to be identical with her image of it – her image and what it imaged were seen and felt as the same. There was no imagining, just the facts; no thinking about what they imagined, just finding out the facts. Therefore it was nearly impossible not to join as an actor in the anxiety of the reality of the imminent pregnancy. It was tempting, as it were, to jump on the stage to sort out Othello and rescue Desdemona. But that is, I suggest, a warning signal, a sign of concrete thinking.

When I was able to hold back and think of her account as a complex image of an emotional experience, it became possible to wonder what emotional experience it pictured. Her anger was obvious but the picture took me beyond that. Were she to have said, 'I feel the way a woman would feel who is about to deliver a child and she finds that ...'. What? That she is desperately alone? It was a poignant picture of desperate, helpless loneliness. But she behaved and spoke as if she were anything but helpless. She was *feeling* angry. When I tried to think with her about her saying that she was unable to cope and desperately needed him while at the same time she felt she had to be the one who stayed on top of things, she would come back angrily, 'If I don't, who would? Look what would happen if I weren't dealing with things.'

His presentation was as difficult to enter into imaginatively as hers was irresistible to enter into as an actor. When, however, I tried to picture this complex image of a man, a husband and a father, at a moment of crisis and needing comfort, the loneliness seemed overwhelming. Entering imaginatively into their stories in contrast to their consciously experienced emotions, gave me a powerful sense of an emotional experience that we could describe as very real but unconscious. Both their stories and images listened to imaginatively were evocative of emotional experience much richer and more specific to them

than any word like 'loneliness' can convey. Or perhaps we should say that a word like 'loneliness' conveys emotion only because it evokes images or stories like these in our minds.

As I tried imaginatively to enter into these images we were taken back to the first session when they had told me that they had built their lives around the children but had neglected their relationship. This story in the session pictures them doing just that, neglecting their relationship and focusing on the children, especially the imminent arrival. Slowly, in response to my voicing what I was hearing in these stories, each slowly began to speak more about what was going on inside. She was longing for him, not to look after the children or even the baby – although she needed that too. Her emotional reality was her need, her longing, for him *for herself*. He talked about how her coping made him feel unnecessary, unwanted. What was the point of wanting her when she neither wanted nor needed him? It was a painful moment.

Focusing on the role of imagination, the imaging, does not take us away from thinking in terms of transference. What it does do is give us a lively way to think with the patient how the imaging gathers and develops the transference, how it shapes and forms it and gives it a local habitation. Here, for example, we might say that the transference relationship was a relationship with an object that had concrete expectations of what these two people should or should not do, praising them when they did well and criticizing them when they did not. We could picture an authority figure who was at pains to show each of them how to do their duty, a figure less interested in their own emotional experience and more concerned with expectations, expecting to feel what they were supposed to feel and suppress what they did feel. One might say it was a state of mind that, in discouraging imagining and thinking, could eventually result in a death of imagination.

It is worth noting that one area where we are less tempted into this kind of concrete thinking is in play therapy with children. Although we might enter into the game when invited by the child, we always think of play as a picture, a potential communication of emotional experience. If we get confused, the child will tell us that this is 'just pretend'. Of course it is not *just* pretend any more than *Othello* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is *just* pretend. Such occasions offer the possibility of imaging and thus thinking about emotional experience. However, with adults in the consulting room, the imaging of emotional experience is much less easy to notice given that it is often in the form of stories and descriptions of crises that demand action.

## The rebirth of imagination

I have talked about the birth and death of imagination, but what about the idea of a rebirth of imagination? We have seen the birth of imagination occurring in

the intercourse of mother and baby. Is intercourse perhaps the key to a rebirth of imagination?

It brings to mind the way I have used the notion of intercourse when discussing couples and their apparently irreconcilable differences (Fisher, 2001). Without our knowing how the couple could possibly resolve such differences, or even turn them into creative differences, I described a hope that an intercourse of minds could lead to an 'offspring' that resembles both but is identical to neither. Perhaps now we need to put alongside that image of creative genital intercourse the picture of an earlier intercourse, that of mother and baby.

This is the intercourse of the baby expressing, expelling or projecting fragments of its experience and the mother taking into herself these fragments as if they were communications that evoke communication. Bion calls this the mother's reverie, which is in turn internalized by the baby as its own capacity for reverie. The mother takes into herself, for example, the 'pain sensation generated cry' or the 'smile of pleasure beyond description' of her beautiful baby and creates images for herself of those experiences – that is, she imaginatively identifies with her baby. The baby takes in turn into itself the 'pain that can be endured' or the 'adoring gaze of an overwhelmingly beautiful object' – that is, the baby begins to be able to imaginatively identify itself.

Neither will ever be a 'perfect' understanding. Neither mother nor baby can ever know what the other is feeling in the way that we know what mechanism is driving the clock by taking it apart and studying it. We 'know' what the other is feeling by our capacity for imaginative identification. But it involves a leap of faith and one can always be mistaken. That is why reality-testing is important most of all in intimate relationships where so much is at stake, and why concrete thinking is so potentially damaging. Imaginative identification can only approximate what the other is feeling. Its success is discovered in the dialogue as the other is able to take it in and image it in his or her own way. It is not that one's mother or partner or therapist reflects exactly what is felt, nor that our artists tell us exactly what we feel, but that the other, the artist, evokes in us a potentially deepened understanding of and thus capacity for our emotional experience. That is what Shakespeare does in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, helping us notice the birth and death of imagination.

If we had failed to notice the role of imagination in the falling in love of the young lovers and the vicissitudes of their affections, how could we miss it as we watch Bottom, translated with the head of an ass, enjoying the adoring attention of Queen Titania and her fairies? As many commentators and play-goers have remarked, Bottom is perhaps the most humanly appealing character in the play. Listening to him as he wakes from his 'dream', we are, one might say, seeing the poetry of emotional experience. He awakes, waiting for his cue in the play they have been rehearsing, only to find that his fellow actors have deserted him:

> Stolen hence,
> And left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision
> I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what
> dream it was. Man is but an ass if he go about to
> expound this dream. Methought I was – there is no
> man can tell what. Methought I was – methought
> I had – but man is but a patched fool if he
> will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of
> man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen,
> man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive,
> nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will
> get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream:
> it shall be called 'Bottom's Dream', because it
> hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end
> of a play, before the Duke. Peradventure, to make it
> the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. (4.1.202–217)

The challenge the story of 'Bottom's Dream' describes can be seen as an aesthetic one and that is why Bottom needs a poet. The first and continuing challenge of growth and development – and of psychoanalytic therapy – is an aesthetic one calling for a poet. Of course, Bottom says, 'Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream'. What is needed is *not* explaining, the 'if-then' function of the mind – the explaining mode of therapy. What is needed is the imagining, the 'a-ha' function of the mind – the stories and 'factual accounts' that picture emotional experience, the poetry of emotional experience. Therefore Bottom is going to get Peter Quince 'to write a ballad of this dream'. The aesthetic challenge is to *listen* with *new eyes*, *look* with *new ears*, *taste* with the *hand*, or *conceive* with the *tongue*. That I take as Shakespeare's poetic image for a rebirth of imagination.

## Note

References to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are given by act, scene and line in the 1979 Arden Shakespeare Edition edited by Harold F. Brooks.

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# How a child represents the world through art

DOROTHY JUDD

> Life is incoherent unless we give it form.
> Susanne Langer

> A picture has been said to be something between a thing and a thought.
> Samuel Palmer


## ABSTRACT

*This paper explores the origins and development of children's need to paint and draw. The author makes links between the creative process and the early expressions of the child's inner world – such as making sounds, ways of seeing, messing and playing – that a child makes, and how both processes require a parent's mind to attempt to receive them. There are references to the work of Klein and Bion, as well as to artists whose philosophy is inspired by a child's vision. The capacity and need to draw and paint is linked with the child's capacity to use symbolization as a means of managing the pain of frustration, separation and loss: without an awareness of separation there would be no need to use symbolization. The paper draws on examples, illustrated in the text, of children's and adolescents' drawings in various contexts. These were produced both within a therapeutic relationship with the author in her capacity as a psychoanalytical child psychotherapist, and in ordinary domestic situations.*


**Key words** child and adolescent art, creativity, fantasy, mourning, symbolization

In order to explore this rich subject I will go back to some early beginnings in an infant's life, and to try to follow the path along which, in good-enough nurturing and health, the child first begins to represent the world through art.

Does this process of a more plastic expression begin when a young child first makes marks and then scribbles with a pen, or perhaps earlier when a baby seems to enjoy smearing her food on the tray of her highchair? Can it begin

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A fuller version of this paper was given as part of *The Mind's Eye* Tavistock Clinic Public Lectures Series, The Tavistock Centre, London NW3 5BA, on 19 November 2003.
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with the experience of defecating, or perhaps when her mother changes her nappy in a way that conveys appreciation? Or when she feels that she magically creates the mother's reappearance, or the nipple when she sucks her thumb? Or prolongs the act of crying to enjoy a musical sound? Or when she fills the emptiness after mother's departure with a game with her two hands touching each other?

Melanie Klein (1952) writes:

> I have seen babies as young as three weeks interrupt their sucking for a short time to play with the mother's breast or look towards her face . . . infants . . . would, in wakeful periods after feeding, lie on mother's lap, look up at her, listen to her voice and respond to it by their facial expression; it was like a loving conversation between mother and baby.

From the foregoing we can see that even in the baby's use of her eyes she is acknowledging that she is separate: by looking *at* another there is the possibility – depending on the type of 'looking' – of a gap between self and other. And it is in this gap that there is the possibility of play, of symbolization and creativity. We are talking now about the beginning of a capacity for representation and even for metaphor.

Wilfred Bion (1962a) developed Klein's ideas of the baby instinctually seeking out an external other, something which will result in a satisfying experience, and which is not only the beginning of a relationship with the external world but which provides 'food for thought' in the baby's mind. From the mother's, and the father's, or the parental couple's, and the wider family's, capacity to respond to the infant's 'preconception', as Bion saw it, begins a benign pattern of mutual responsiveness. By finding a space in someone's mind the infant's capacity to think can develop within the 'container' of that mind.

I propose that a baby's 'evacuations' of painful unbearable feelings – both physical and emotional – and his finding a mother's mind that can process these for him, and transform them into something manageable (through what Bion (1962b) called 'reverie'), is the prototype for a child's capacity to put out on paper his or her unprocessed thoughts. Scribbles, and, later, doodles, can be such outpourings. The young child, and, I think, the older child (and then the artist) seek another to recognize and respond to these marks or pictures. The other's attempt to be available to the marks or drawings at an appropriate level, to not pre-empt or impose or judge, is an essential part of the child's development. We could say that this process is one of the foundations for symbol-formation: for once the mother has gathered – that is, begun to think about – the fragments or disparate elements or mess of a child's picture, the child would be able to move on to the next stage, on to a different picture. However, in creative development we see a continual oscillation between stages of integration and fragmentation: growth and regression. A child who can draw people with separate bodies may revert to cephalopods when anxious.

I am setting the scene for the existence of an internal world, and the constant interplay between internal and external reality, and how in the internal world fantasy develops as a result of the baby's contact with the environment, which does not necessarily mean that they correspond with actual others or parts of others in the environment. The artist Magritte said, 'This is how we see the world. We see it as being outside ourselves even though it is only a mental representation of what we experience on the inside.' Klein and those who developed her ideas saw fantasy as the means of making sense of the external world as well as the internal world. I would add that drawing and painting can fulfil this function too: they are all ways of *thinking* things through.

As well as moments between a mother and baby like the one described by Klein earlier, which can contain some element of rudimentary playfulness, there are the inevitable impingements and deficits in the mother's care, as well as actual separations, which promote an awareness of separateness, and where the infant is prompted to *create* the absent or less-than-perfect mother. *The intrinsically painful impingements and separations lead to an impetus to recreate that which is missing.* Bion writes that this absence promotes thinking: that an experience of the absent object promotes the need to think about it. Thinking about it, even in inchoate sensual terms, is not only a use of internal resources but is a creation. Therefore if the infant has had sufficient experience of a containing mother, a manageable amount of separation can promote growth.

It is no coincidence that many of the examples of pictures in this paper, from a wide population of children of all ages, either are ways of trying to manage or transform loss, or are attempts to avoid the experience of loss. This is because loss – loss through weaning, through Oedipal conflicts, through separations – is never fully resolved. Art is one way that children can try to process this lifelong struggle.

I will illustrate what I am describing: a baby of 11 months is looking at a picture book with his father. Father points to a cat, and says 'Cat, *miaow-miaow*.' The family have a cat called Moses which the children call Mo-mo. The father adds, 'Mo-mo.' The baby looks seriously at the picture, briefly turns his head to look up at father, looks again at the picture, and scratches at the picture as if to ascertain its flatness or solidity. A week or so later he too points at the picture, and makes his own version of the cat's sounds. A few weeks later he is on his own with this book, and he finds the picture, and points to it, and makes sounds. He is of course beginning to apportion meaning to a two-dimensional picture: to give it life, and to connect it (perhaps) with his own cat. Furthermore he is evoking his (absent) father with whom he associates this process, by recreating it.

Now, in this vignette it is quite a big conceptual leap that the baby is making, for he knows that if he touches the page he will feel smoothness and nothing else. He is allowing for illusion and for imagination and for abstraction.

As Susanne Langer wrote, 'All forms in art, then, are abstract forms; their content is only a semblance, a pure appearance, whose function is to make them . . . apparent. . . . Its very substance . . . is an abstraction from material existence' (1953: 50). Furthermore, she added that 'forms are symbols for the articulation of feeling, and convey the elusive and yet familiar pattern of sentience'. She continued, 'Like speech, that is physically nothing but little buzzing sounds, it is filled with its meaning, and its meaning is a reality' (1953: 52); and, '. . . what art expresses is *not* actual feeling, but ideas of feeling . . .' (1953: 59).

Paul Klee wrote, 'Paintings come into existence without conscious control; sometimes also with conscious control. You don't know exactly what they are going to be like . . . the best pictures cannot be willed; they just come into being' (Petitpierre, 1957). He admitted to a colleague that he sometimes failed to achieve the directness of children's art: 'Child's play! . . . the critics often say that my pictures resemble the scribbles and messes of children. I hope they do! The pictures that my little boy Felix paints are often better than mine, because mine have often been filtered through the brain, which regrettably I cannot always avoid because sometimes I work too much' (quoted by Lynton, 1964).

In this paper I draw upon pictures by children I have known personally, as well as those I have worked with as an art therapist many decades ago, and then as a child and adolescent psychoanalytical psychotherapist in hospitals as well as in private practice.

I begin with *spontaneous drawings*, or *scribbles*, into which the child 'reads' the image he has created – rather like Winnicott's (1971) squiggle game.

The first picture (Figure 1) is by a boy of almost 3 years old. He said it was of a pig. This is often the way that younger children – that is, 2- to 3-year-olds – discover their creative potential. This scribble stage, of experimenting with line, when an image is discovered, has been called 'fortuitous realism' (Luquet, 1927). Adults often make suggestions as to what the child has drawn, which may, or may not, be helpful to the child's own development of their fantasy life.

The next three drawings (Figure 2) are by a boy, Jamie, aged 3. He said they were 'Mummy as a little girl', 'A duck' and 'An elephant'. Six months later, Jamie produced Figure 3, saying it was a spider in its web. All these drawings show a combination of intentionality and spontaneity, or a fusion of external reality and the child's imagination.

Some adult artists have used a similar process: Leonardo da Vinci saw faces in damp stains on walls and told his students to try to see something objective in cloud formations. Paul Klee wrote in his diary that when he was 9 his 'bent for the bizarre' announced itself: for, in the patterns of marble tables he would pick out human grotesques and capture them with a pencil (Klee, 1898–1918: 8).

As well as the child's wish to bring into being the inchoate world of feelings and ideas, linked with aesthetic pleasure, there is motor pleasure in the process.

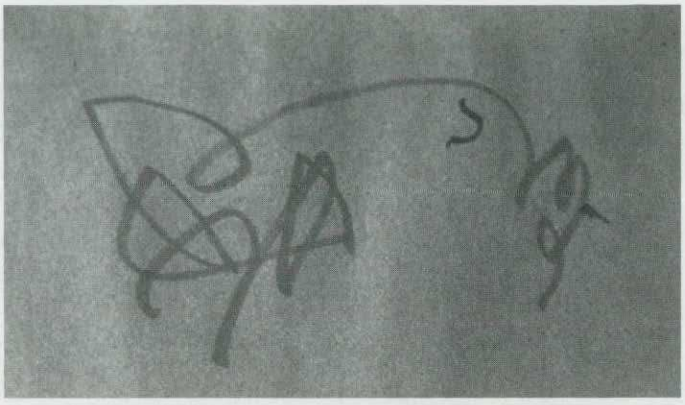


Figure 1: Drawing by a boy, aged almost 3, of a pig.

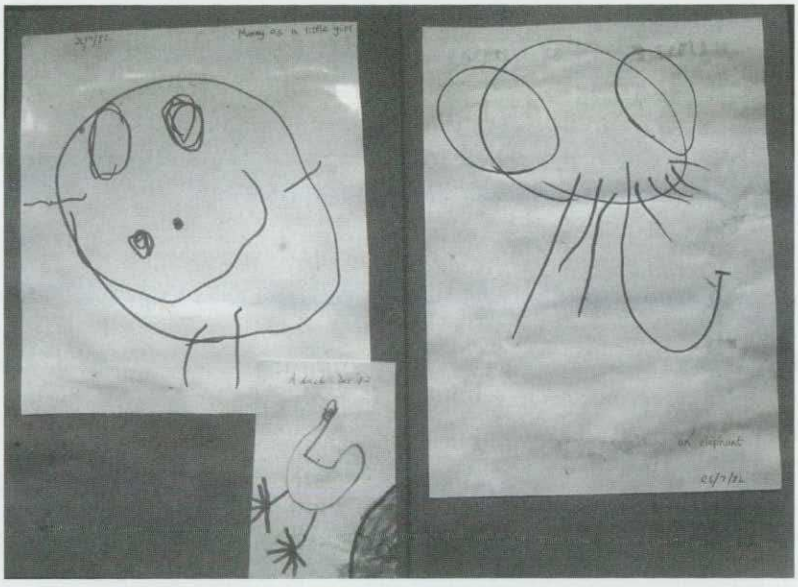


Figure 2: Drawings by Jamie, aged 3: 'Mummy as a little girl', 'A duck' and 'An elephant'.

This is particularly apparent in young children, where the movement of the arm and the scribble on paper, or marks upon sand at the seaside, feel as if the child's whole being is involved in the process. A child's early scribbles reflect the very movements of being physically in the world, of deliberately walking, bending, lying down. Arnheim (1969) wrote, 'There is abundant movement in children, and thus drawing starts as gambolling on paper.'

The basic early patterns are non-figurative motifs which reflect attempts at mastery of basic movements and rhythms, such as 'round and round' and 'up

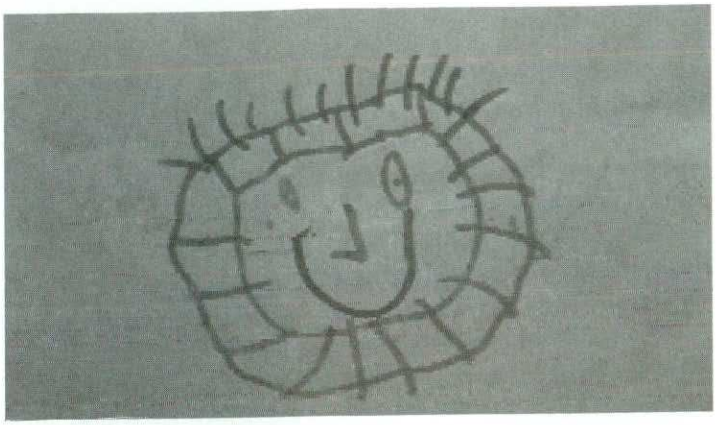


Figure 3: Drawing by Jamie, aged 3, of a spider in its web.

and down', of diagonals, of crosses and triangles, not necessarily purposely made but in the process of a physical movement which the child soon uses as a place with the potential for meaning to emerge. Just as babble becomes speech because the parents attempt to 'hear' and articulate what the child is saying, so scribbles can become a 'picture of . . .' if adults attempt to see it. (Although this selection of pictures has a bias towards the pictorial, we need to remember that some children use colour and rhythm and the movement or vigour of line in a more abstract way to evoke mood.)

Paul Klee wrote not only about child art but about his approach to drawing and painting: 'A certain fire of becoming flares up; it is conducted through the hand, flows to the picture surface and there bursts into a spark, closing the circle whence it came. . . . The pictorial work springs from movement, it is itself fixated movement, and it is apprehended by [eye] movement.' As Klee famously said, 'A line is a dot going for a walk.'

Marion Milner (1986) described the way that she discovered her own creative potential as an adult by feeling in her body the very spirit of what she was trying to draw. She wrote, ' . . . although it was certainly a condition of the spirit it essentially also encompassed the body. For the making of any drawing, if it was at all satisfying, seemed to be accomplished by a spreading of the imaginative body in wide awareness and this somehow included one's physical body as well as what was being drawn' (1986: 106). The sculptor Brancusi said, 'When you see a fish, you don't think of its scales, do you? You think of its speed, its floating, flashing body . . . I just want the flash of its spirit' (quoted in Lewis, 1957: 43).

A congenitally blind 13-year-old boy produced Figure 4, of his favourite teacher. He felt his way across the page as he drew, as if measuring distances with his fingers. He drew with verve, and what I found interesting is that he felt his teeth with his tongue as he drew her teeth, for to draw *how things felt from the inside* was, for him, more sensible than drawing appearances that he could not see.

Of course emotional difficulties impede this process: a 6-year-old boy who had been abused had a depressed mother who was unable to see him as separate. When the boy's teacher gave each child an outline of a fish drawn on paper for them to paint, this boy could not 'read' the line as an outline, or as a container for the fish shape, but painted on the page indiscriminately.

**Pictures as an attempt at mastery, and to tell a story**

Figure 5 is by a boy, Tom, aged exactly 3. He said that it was 'someone with their shoelaces undone.' It expresses the 'undo-ableness' of tying shoelaces for this child at this age. Fundamentally, it is about utter helplessness.

The next drawing (Figure 6) was by Tom aged almost 4, and was done while his mother was out for the day and he was at home with his father. He said that

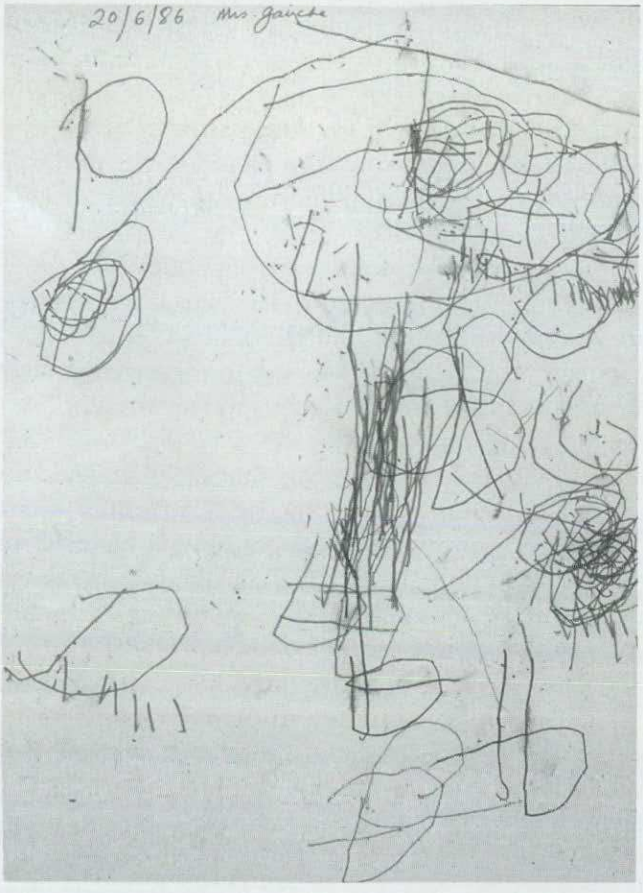



Figure 4: Drawing by a congenitally blind 13-year-old boy of his favourite teacher.

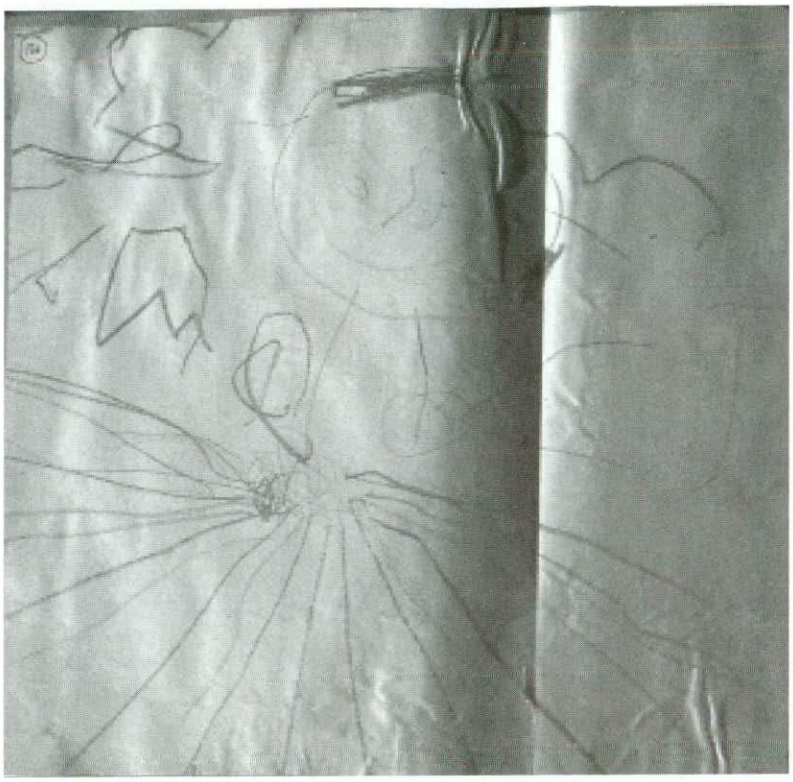


Figure 5: Drawing by Tom, aged 3, of 'someone with their shoelaces undone'.

the big buildings were blocks of flats. They seem to denote the vastness, and perhaps potentially overwhelming nature, of external structures: the outside world where Mummy was. And yet he placed himself securely between his parents; his mother's location is joined to his house, despite the separation. Prompted by feelings of loss, he is able to create the lost person in a way that gives him some mastery over the situation.

The next drawing (Figure 7) is by Tom a month later. He said 'He's bleeded himself' and, as you can see, blood pours from the figure's fingertips. The blood and the tears flow. This is a tragic picture which expresses the terrible side of his helplessness, but in a way that, through his mastery of his subject, shows an enjoyment of the creative process. At an early age he has the capacity to depict shoulders and a delineated body, which usually does not develop until much later. So, one could say, he is less helpless and tragic for having transformed his feelings into this picture.

The same child, aged 4 years 3 months, produced Figure 8. It is rather like a dream in content. He said, 'This tower was nearly going to fall down and by mistake the cook dropped custard on the boy's head because the tower was so

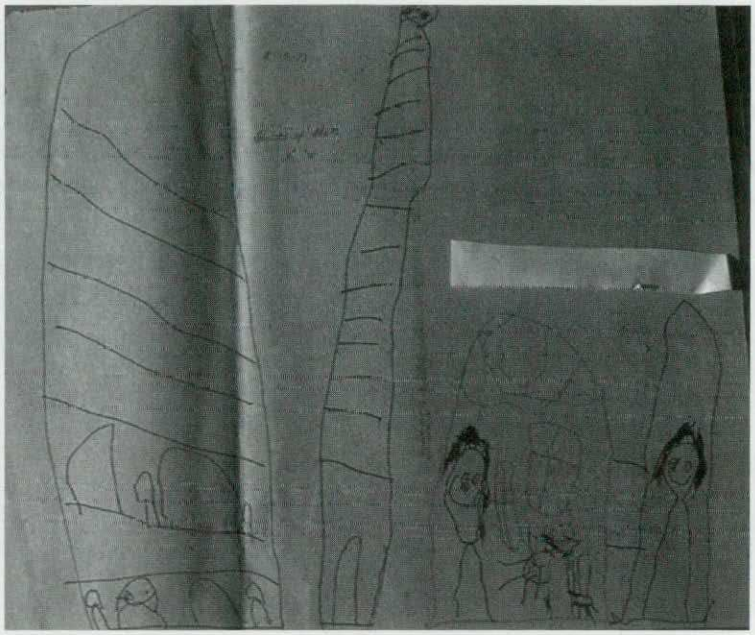


Figure 6: Drawing by Tom, aged almost 4, of blocks of flats, done while his mother was out for the day.


Figure 7: Drawing by Tom aged 4, showing a figure who has 'bleeded himself'.

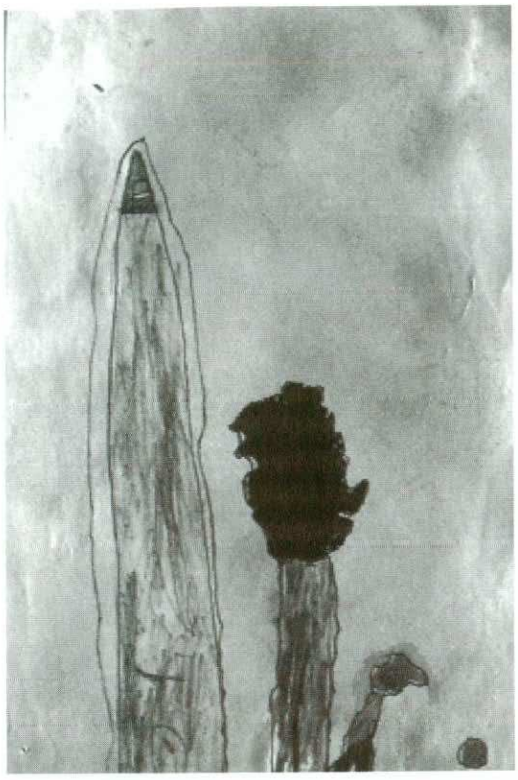


Figure 8: Drawing by Tom, aged 4 years and 3 months, of a tower, this time introducing the comforting element of custard.

wiggling.' There is a phallic quality to the tower, as earlier to the blocks of flats. Now, he makes the big tower more accessible and safer by introducing a slapstick, or comforting, element – the custard.

There is enormous power in being able to play with shapes and seeing what emerges, which is what happens in play: the child can risk dangerous scenarios when there is a sense of being in 'potential space', as Winnicott (1971) called it, when the baby, and then the child, creatively plays in the potential space, with the use of symbols. The symbols stand both for cultural experiences outside the child and also for internal phenomena of the child and of his experience of the internal mother.

Tom, when aged 4 years and 9 months, produced Figure 9. All he said about this was: 'A burglar escaped from the prison.' Now we can see his developing capacity not only for symbolization but also for abstraction and imagination, perhaps aided by the use of paint.

A month later this child drew a story, full of action (Figures 10 and 11). His commentary was: 'Somebody about to step on an ant's church. See the ants on the ground. And then he stepped on it and there were ants flying up in the air.'

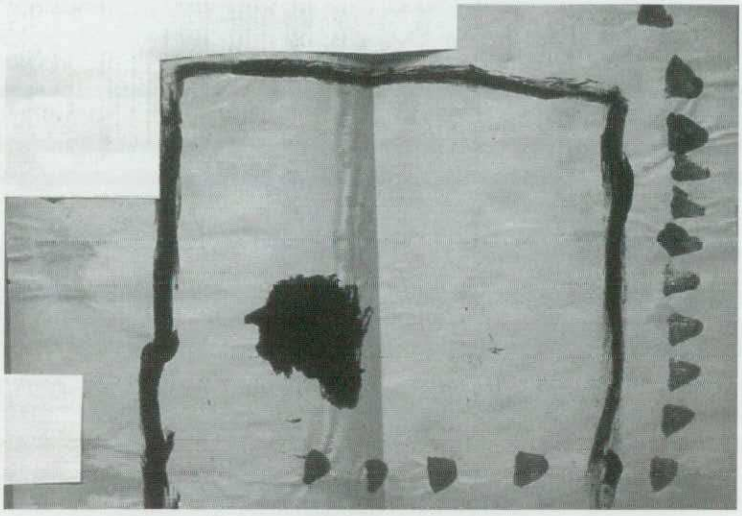


Figure 9: Tom, aged 4 and 9 months, produced this drawing of 'A burglar escaped from the prison'.

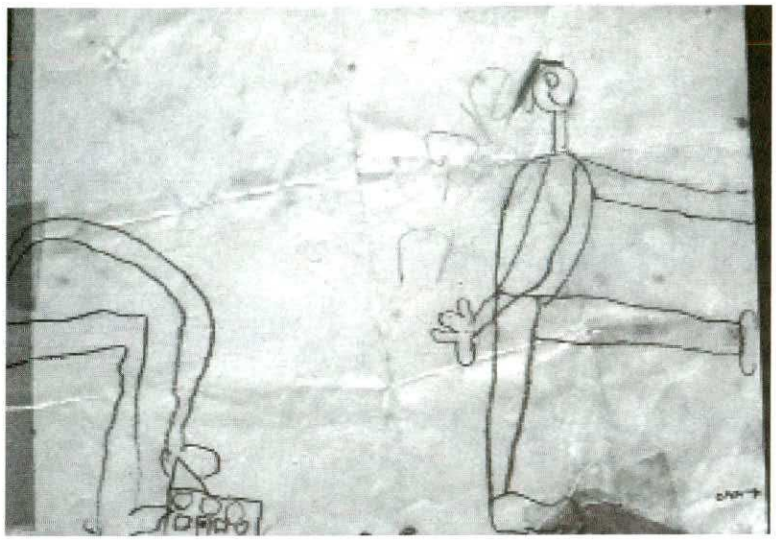
Again, there is mastery in this, and humour. He is now able to show side-views of people, and action.

Jamie (mentioned earlier) drew Figure 12 when he was exactly 4. He said it was 'Someone rushing to work. Some trees in the distance.' He is able to spontaneously use perspective, action and composition, to give life to an idea.

**Pictures as narratives about loss – some clinical examples**

Stephen is a 10-year-old boy in foster care together with his older brother. He had suffered from severe physical abuse from his stepfather. Despite cognitive delay, and very poor speech, which was more like a 3-year-old's, his drawings are extremely articulate.

He drew (Figure 13 – top drawing) the outline of a big truck, deploying the picture space well. The truck had many details, including 'moke' (smoke) coming out of a funnel, sirens, an aerial, hooks, levers and big wheels. Eventually he drew a small driver sitting in the cabin. He said it was a rescue truck. One can see that the truck is a personification of a very capable parental figure. He took another piece of paper (Figure 13 – bottom drawing) and drew another vehicle, a truck that was a transporter. He again added many details and functions as before. Then he placed a much smaller vehicle on the back. He drew dents and marks on the little one and said that it had been in a crash (his pronunciation was 'trash') and that it was going to be dumped in a rubbish dump. He added chains to keep it in position. I asked if it could be fixed. He said no. I said that it looked like a sad picture. He now drew another slightly



Figures 10 and 11: Tom, aged 4 and 10 months, drew this pair of pictures about 'someone about to step on an ant's church' and then stepping on it.

bigger vehicle on top of the little one – no doubt his brother – also damaged and also going to the dump. He put it aside, saying it was finished.

Earlier, Stephen had doodled with a wax crayon. He now returned to that earlier picture. He completed a curved shape on the left and drew a rectangle in the centre. He said it was a hut. When I did not understand his pronunciation of 'hut' he said 'shed'. The curved shape was an empty hay barn. I commented

Figure 12: Drawing by Jamie, aged 4, of 'someone rushing to work'.

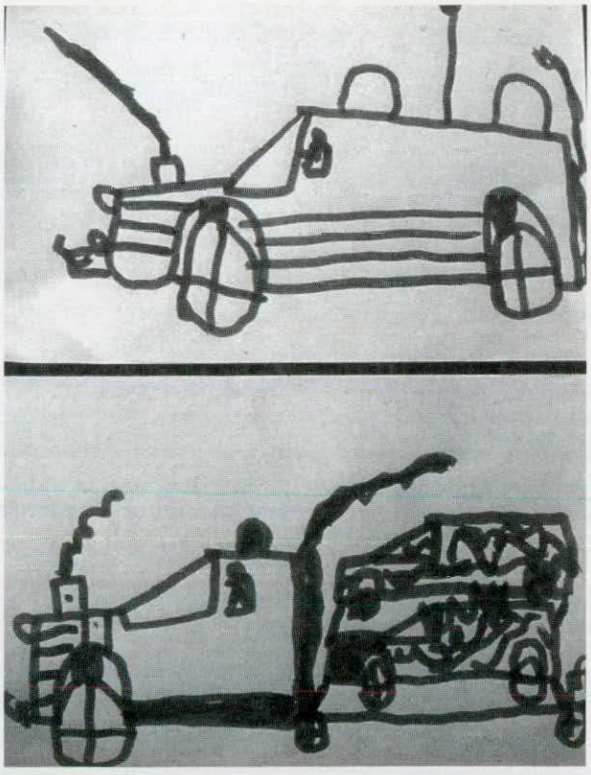


Figure 13: Stephen, aged 13, drew these trucks: top, a rescue truck; bottom, a transporter truck carrying two damaged trucks to the dump.

on the picture being empty. He said the shed was for tractors, but they were all out. He walked away from the picture, and explored other things in the room in a respectful way, and talked about his own little garden (at his foster home) where he grows vegetables. He returned to the drawing and added a 'damaged modern' shed on the right (earlier he said that his mother lived in a 'modern' bungalow), housing lots of hay he said, and a bright yellow sun in the corner. I said that suddenly the picture did not look so empty. He explained a 'dent' on the side of the shed, and 'fixed' it by making a new straight line to correct the damaged area.

From the foregoing one can see how he became more hopeful about his capacity to repair his internal mother. The fact that he could relate to me in quite a lively way, and show a healthy curiosity about me and the room, conveyed that he had not given up in his search for a mother who could receive his drawings.

A 10-year-old boy, Paul, who I saw for an assessment as part of a court report, looked sullen and serious when I fetched him from the waiting room. He produced Figure 14 about a quarter of an hour into the meeting. First he doodled shapes that I realized were skateboards, then he drew a boy skateboarding, with a chain hanging from his pocket, then a boy impressively upside down on a ramp holding his skateboard. He seemed to tolerate my commentary on what I thought he was drawing. He said he liked skateboarding but that he no longer had a skateboard. Occasionally he clarified something verbally, but generally remained silent. He added a bird near another boy, giving an impression of flight and making the boy look as though he was flying too. He added a drawing of Bart Simpson, then other Simpson characters. He crossed out one he did not like. He added a small sun and two clouds.

Earlier I had clarified what he understood the purpose of the meeting was, so that he knew this was an assessment for a court report. He began to talk about his brothers and sisters and himself being in care because they were 'naughty'. I asked if that was the whole story. He nodded. I said it must be very hard for him to feel that it was all because they were naughty – that it was entirely their fault. At that point he drew a blue vortex, and then a spiral, which he cleverly turned into a snail's shell by adding a smiley snail. His drawing was very expressive, but he himself was quite quiet, like a snail. He then drew a boy, whose jumper he coloured in red, adding a school logo. He said it was Damian, the brother who he knew I had seen in the hour before, in his red school jumper. He added his brother Neil next, then himself, then his brother Danny, and then his two sisters. He added a small figure – his youngest brother – next to Damian, peeping out. He then drew his mother, and lastly his 'father', who he (and I) knew was the father of the two youngest children but not of himself or the other children. He made all of them smile, except for father, who appeared to be looking away. He added further details to the family members, and then drew the tree and the big orange sun. Lastly he added the ice-cream van.

He did not respond to my questions or my thoughts about the family, but turned to a new page (Figure 15) where he sketched what he said was a hedge-sparrow, faintly and delicately in pencil. Now he explained that he liked

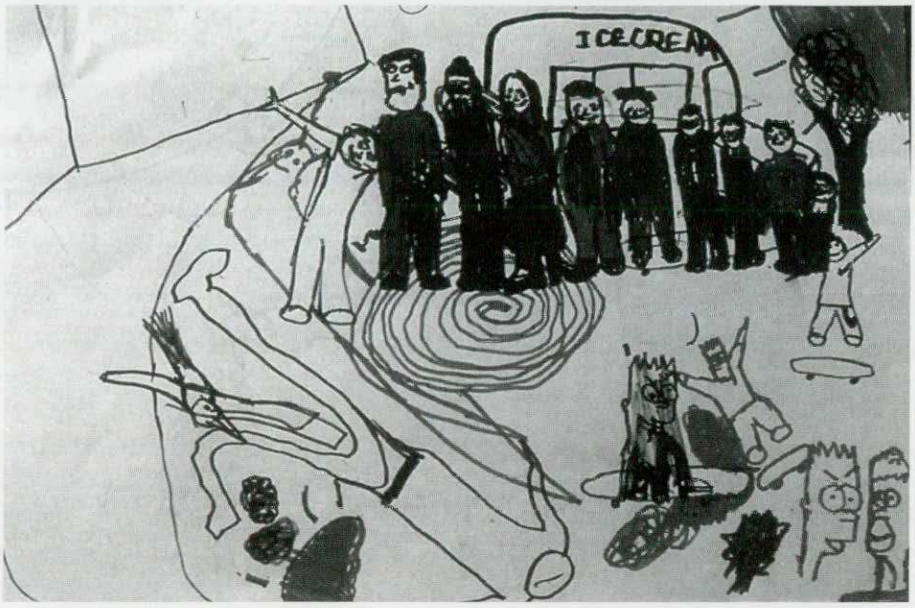



Figure 14: Paul, aged 10, drew this multi-layered picture that included his family, skateboarders and characters from the Simpsons.

hedge-sparrows because they were tough; he said cuckoos chuck hedge-sparrows out of the nest, and then all the babies die. I wondered (but did not say) if he felt ousted by the three subsequent babies his mother had, as well as being ousted from the nest into care. He was aware of a further 'ousting' when he would soon be moved yet again from his foster carers.

He continued to be cut off in his manner. Finally he drew a branch on which the bird sat, and an owl about to fly into its hole in a tree, clutching a small mouse. I asked what the owl was going to do with the mouse, thinking that perhaps Paul thought that it was for its babies. 'Eat it, of course!' he replied, in a way that conveyed that he thought I was idiotic for asking.

The taxi hooted and he dashed off, not saying goodbye, clearly leaving me with any feelings of *being left*.

Figure 14 is an attempt at a communication in a turbulent world. It is interesting that the vortex happens to be where his mother is, similarly the snail-shell spiral. His mother and stepfather are beyond the sort of bracket that the ice-cream van creates, the seven siblings are grouped correctly in age and size order, as a pack or bunch. The only discernible gap between the figures is between Paul and his next brother Danny, when indeed another brother, Matthew, died as a baby, just before Paul's birth. The parents are not clearly differentiated in function other than being a little bigger. His favourite brother (Damian) somehow stands out and looks more alive and real and seems more warmed by the sun and wears the same colour jumper as his father. Paul himself – like the brother on his left – looks thin

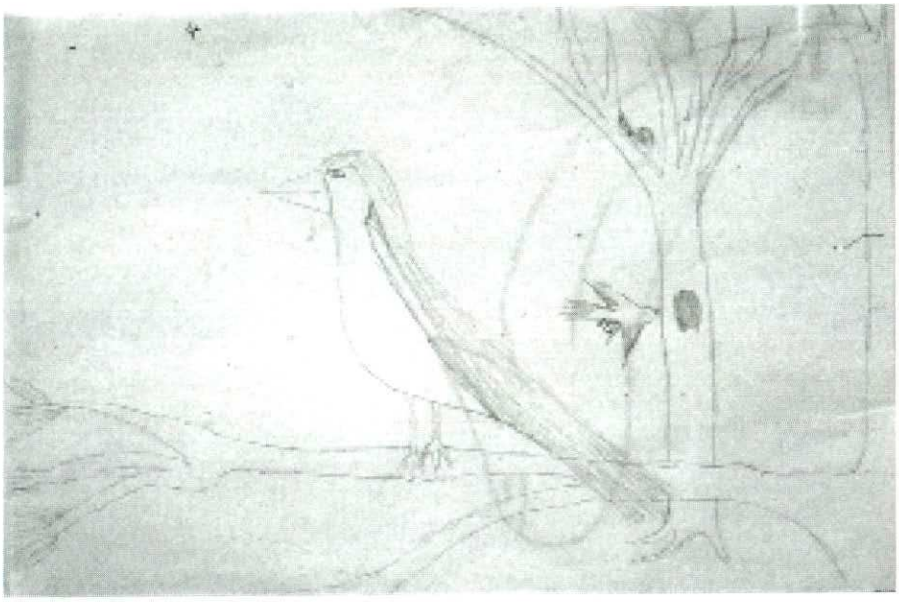


Figure 15: Drawing by Paul, aged 10, of a hedge-sparrow, which he said he liked because they were tough.

and insubstantial. All the family have their arms behind their backs, implying helplessness, unlike the skateboarders who manage a lively reaching-out in the world. He chose to draw all this for me, nonchalantly, as if he was only mucking about, yet knowing of course that this was an assessment for a court report which would help to decide the fate of his siblings and himself.

The picture shows layers of pre-adolescent preoccupations and an emergence from stylized drawing (the cartoons) to much greater expressiveness (the bird, the skateboarder). The tree on the right stops the children from falling off the page. The overall expression is of some order and coherence, despite the fragmentation: the eye is drawn to the stationary family, while other shapes whirl and spin. There is much more one could say about this drawing, but what I want to draw attention to are the layers of meaning, conscious and unconscious, that Paul felt able to risk and share in my presence.

Finally with his next drawing (Figure 15) he let me know that he was really a tough hedge-sparrow and I was naïve to imagine that an owl would feed its babies instead of gobbling the mouse itself. He lived in a world where survival was the name of the game. The hopeful factors, however, are that he risked showing his vulnerability in the tentative sensitive style of the bird drawing, and although he could not identify consciously with the mouse-victim or the baby hedge-sparrows who die when evicted, they are all, like the lively skate-boarders in the first drawing, aspects of himself for me to glimpse, through his impressive capacity to use drawing as an expression.

It is not surprising that the precipitating factors in these children being taken into care were chaotic family life, neglect and the children witnessing domestic violence.

Another child whose picture (Figure 16) was an explication of his central psychological problem was Brian (aged 7) – a very sad boy who looked extremely deprived, reminding me of a Dickensian child who would have been sent to sweep chimneys 150 years ago. His mother was mentally ill. He was in foster care, and he pined for his parents. This picture probably says it all. Note how he has separated the couple, although they were apparently still living together.

Figure 17 is by a 14-year-old girl who was in foster care, and still saw her mother. She was becoming very aware of the father she had never known and searched for in her mind. She produced a series of similar bleak pictures of a mysterious solitary male figure in a landscape.

Another 14-year-old girl's mother was mentally ill. Is this (Figure 18) not a creative symbol for her mother? One might say that she was rendering her mother's mind into something beautiful, yet bizarre. Is she producing something dead or deadly, or on the side of life? Is there a sense of a capacity to *play* in the space between her internal world and external reality? We could wonder if, in this way, the art product is truly a symbol for what is both in her mind and what is outside her mind.

Some paintings are hardly symbolic, especially during the turbulence of adolescence: they are raw and unprocessed statements of their state of mind. One girl tore up such a wet muddy painting. Children can feel frightened or more

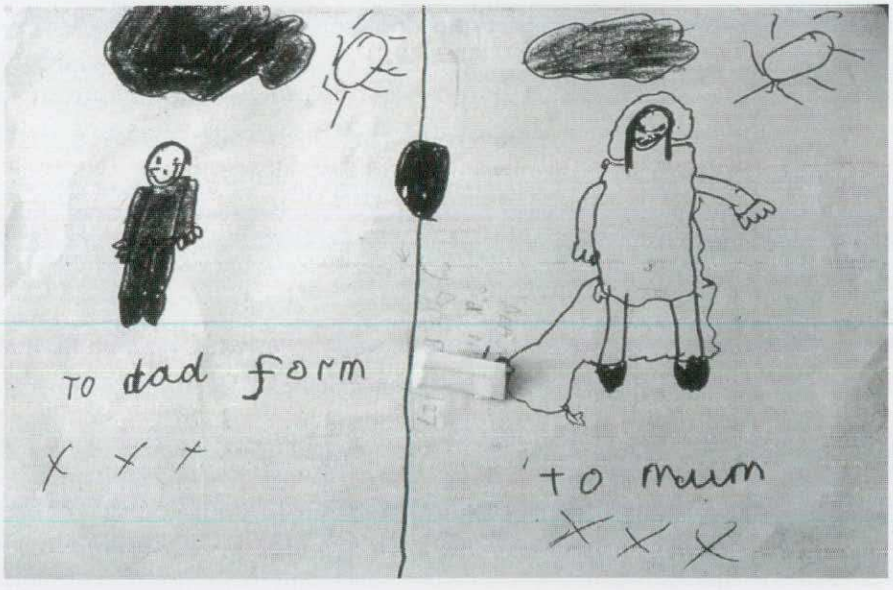



Figure 16: Drawing by Brian, aged 7, who was living in foster care and missing his parents.

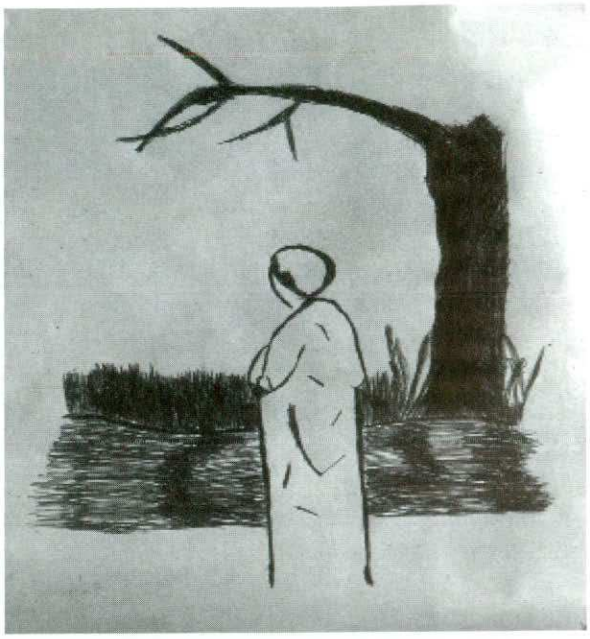


Figure 17: Drawing by a 14-year-old girl in foster care, who was becoming very aware of the father she had never known.

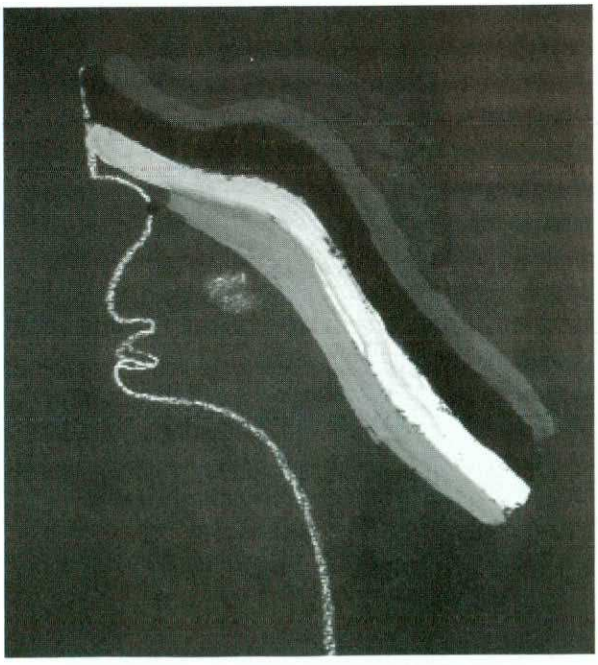


Figure 18: Drawing by a 14-year-old girl whose mother was mentally ill.

disturbed by making these sorts of pictures, which are not necessarily helping them to transform the terror or persecution. Nevertheless the art product exists and may lead to feeling understood if they are part of a therapeutic relationship: to transform the uncertainties and instability, the 'nameless dread'.

Ten-year-old Laura was obsessional in her behaviour: she was always straightening things on the table, telling me that at night she had to keep getting out of bed to straighten her teddy bears, and yet she produced a drawing which was imaginative and symbolically rich. She said it was 'a pot of flowers' and that the big flower was Dad, and the more eclipsed one was Mum, and the four little flowers were her and her three siblings.

The more Laura talked, the more I realized how cut-and-dried her world was and how much she tried to deny separation and loss. She said that her foster mother was 'just like' her Mum. However, her unconscious produced a maternal shape – the vase – that looked cracked and wobbly, a 'mother' flower that was incoherent and was masked by the father, and a rug with a fringe that looked aggressive.

### Controlled patterns, often filling the whole page, sometimes determinedly not leaving white gaps

Most people are familiar with children's patterns which fill the page, or sometimes simply areas of colour diligently worked, often with ruled straight lines. These are often anxious, heavily defended art-products: the children are relying on rulers and rules as a way of keeping the unexpected at bay. It is rather like a child who cannot really play, who is not making discoveries, but who uses toys repetitively with little meaning other than to control his or her objects and thus avoid mess and chaos. Often the child attempts to cover every millimetre of the white paper.

One wonders what this fear of the white spaces is. It could be a fear of falling between the cracks, or of what might leap out: like the A. A. Milne poem about Bears:

> Whenever I walk in a London street,
> I'm ever so careful to watch my feet;
> And I keep in the squares . . .

It would, I think, be inaccurate to describe these types of patterns as *symbolizing* control: the child is repeating the control, and not sublimating it or symbolizing it.

Hanna Segal writes, 'Symbol formation is an activity of the ego attempting to deal with the anxieties stirred by its relation to the object and is generated primarily by the fear of bad objects and the fear of the loss or inaccessibility of good objects' (1957: 52). However, I think that the type of picture I have just

described would accord with what Segal calls a symbolic equation, and is the basis for concrete thinking: the object – say, the mother – cannot be symbolized, the child cannot tolerate real separation and loss, and instead this picture attempts to keep the world safe but does not *represent* it. Patterns are like factory-produced goods, easily replicated, and lacking in real vitality.

A 12-year-old boy began what he called a 'beach picture' by drawing a yellow stripe along one edge of his page. He began to talk in a general way about his rage towards his father, who had sexually abused him and his sisters: 'I can't believe it, about my Dad, about how he could do what he did. How cruel he is.' He went on to say that his father had ruined his life. He added other colours around the remaining three edges of his page. And then he did not want to continue with the picture. Clearly he could not find a way of symbolizing what was still traumatic for him, so that blank stage – the centre of his picture – firmly bounded by the bands of colour, may have been the closest he could get to letting me know about a central part of his life that could not be thought about.

A young adolescent girl let me know graphically that she wanted to live with her mother and did not want contact with her father – which is what the court proceedings were investigating. She drew her mother four times, around a heart. It was a very controlled picture, with little room for surprises or discoveries.

When thinking about the prevalence of certain shapes in children's drawings, we can usefully draw on Kellogg's (1969) research, and see that a child's pictorial work is strongly influenced by his previous scribbling, so that drawings of humans, animals, buildings, vegetation and so on reflect the diagrams, combines, aggregates, mandalas, suns and radials that he has made before. Quite often, as in some of these examples, the child combines pictorial with non-pictorial elements. Kellogg found universal patterns and marks ranging from Neolithic rock drawings to ancient Egyptian paintings to Chinese art.

Latency-age children often produce clichés in their drawings and paintings, where stylized conventions hold sway over spontaneity. However, one 6-year-old produced a painting (Figure 19) of a sun, which does not lose expression but possibly gains it, through her capacity to organize her image.

We could wonder about the influence of 'taught art' and cultural influences on the child, and how self-taught art finds a place alongside adult expectations.

### An example of working through trauma

Robert was a 5-year-old who drew a man with a cape in which were concealed knives and scissors. He had seen extreme domestic violence and was now well placed in foster care. While he drew he said this was 'Scary Killer'. He said that the face was a mask, with an ordinary man underneath. He was able to talk

Figure 19: Drawing by a 6-year-old of a sun.

realistically about the fights between his parents, having seen his father attempting to strangle his mother, and how he used to have to go to the pub to fetch his father, who would be drunk. He categorically preferred being with his foster parents who he said did *not* beat each other up. His emotional honesty made him an extremely appealing child. Later in the meeting he reminded me that his drawing was of a man pretending to be Scary Killer, and under the mask he was called Goofy. By making this drawing he was working through some of his past horrors: the drawing was not a living nightmare, but was powerfully symbolic of the nightmare. There is something extremely disturbing about a figure that wears a mask that *smiles*, and one can wonder how much Robert had to try to manage this type of confusing message from his father.

Robert next drew a house, which he said he was turning into a puzzle by cutting it up. He said that it was my house, and that I lived alone in it except when he came to see me. The image was ambiguous: strong, yet damaged; repaired, but still cracked; a flower – the only touch of colour and growth – was at the centre of the cuts. I felt he was letting me know the complex state of his internal mother – or me in the way he projected into me: damaged, attacked, and yet claimed by him, and pieced together.

**Work with children in hospital, where, again, the theme of loss prevails**

A girl of 12 who had recently been diagnosed with bone cancer did not seem to want to talk with me about anything. The house she drew was heavily defended, with criss-cross lines across the windows; her use of a ruler added to

the rigidity which she needed to maintain. A month later, by which time she knew she would have an amputation of her lower leg, she produced a drawing which she said was of a chestnut tree, but was in fact only a branch. She stopped when she had only partially coloured it in, in green. I asked her what it was about, and she said that the branch had been chopped off the main tree, and the sap had stopped rising. At that point she did not seem to want to talk more specifically about her concerns, other than more conscious anxieties about being separated from her mother while she was in hospital.

An adolescent girl who did not speak English, and knew she would have to have an amputation, produced an unconscious dense symbol for loss: a striking drawing of a face with only one crying eye.

Fourteen-year-old Adam, who had undergone an amputation of his right arm and shoulder, chose to draw a strong character from the Asterix comic book which looked as if he had only one arm, although Adam himself denied that interpretation. Adam would walk around a busy part of London wearing a T-shirt in winter, and go bare-chested around the hospital: it seemed he wanted to be tough and for others to feel the shock of his situation.

**Pictures as a development over time**

Finally, I will describe the pictures of one particular girl who used art as a vehicle for an accelerated process of mourning. It was her attempt to transcend her experience of loss through symbolic reparation.

Nazreen was a slim 17-year-old – although she seemed more like 14 – Moroccan young woman, who had had an amputation. She had come to hospital for chemotherapy for lung secondaries. She was accompanied by her father; her mother was back home with her four younger siblings. Both father and daughter spent hours every day separately reading the Koran. Neither she nor I could speak each other's language. I used an Arabic dictionary occasionally, to point to a word if I needed to, but mostly we communicated through her drawings and through mime.

In the first picture (Figure 20) that Nazreen produced are fragmented, ungrounded, desolate symbols: a chair (possibly with one leg missing), a reclining stick figure with one leg, a nipple-like object, a glass of water, and an empty plate. I think she produced these images spontaneously from her unconscious. Because of the empty plate and the nipple-like object, all I did was mime that I thought she missed her mother, pointing to 'mother' in the dictionary and miming tears. She smiled and nodded. I felt we were in business.

In the next meeting a few days later she produced Figure 21: a basket with five flowers in it. Alongside she wrote her siblings' names. I felt that she was drawing a basket/mother containing the siblings, but with no room for her. (Notice how the style of drawing is more age-appropriate than her first drawing.)

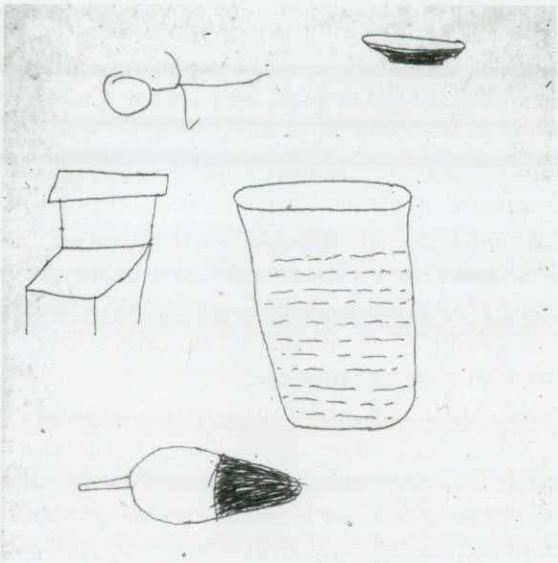


Figure 20: Nazreen, a 17-year-old Moroccan girl who had had one of her legs amputated because of cancer, drew these desolate symbols.

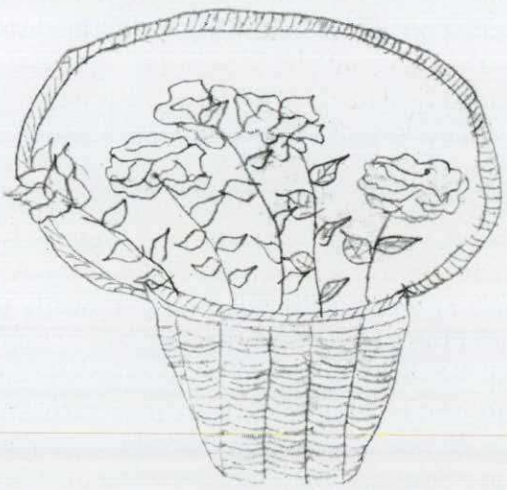


Figure 21: Nazreen's drawing of flowers (symbolizing her siblings) in a basket.

In the next session she drew a girl with two legs (Figure 22), rather awkward insubstantial feet, and a dress with horizontal bands that I have found that children often draw to cross out or hide something beneath. The arms are behind her back, conveying helplessness. Then in the same meeting she drew Figure 23, a girl with one leg facing a prosthesis. Nazreen and I both knew that

Figure 22: Nazreen's drawing of a girl with two legs, whose arms are behind her back, conveying helplessness.

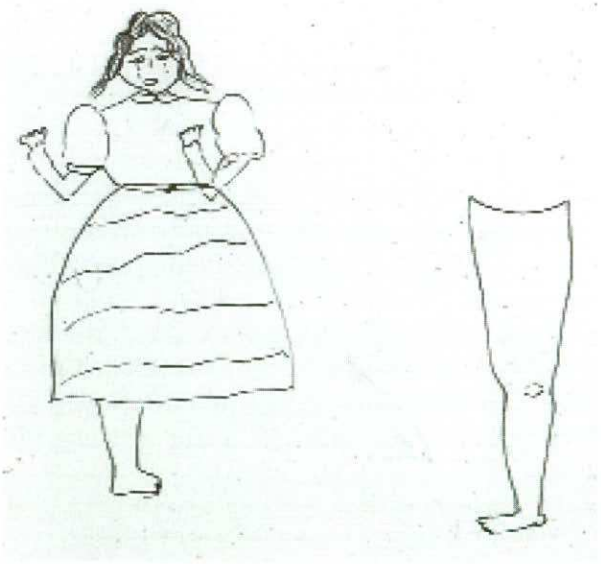


Figure 23: Nazreen's drawing of a girl with one leg facing a prosthesis.

Figure 24: Nazreen's drawing of an idealized doll of Paradise.

there was a financial and bureaucratic struggle to procure a prosthetic leg for her, with which she longed to return home. Observe how in this drawing the legs face each other, with much more movement and vitality than before, and the girl's arms look more potent.

In the next session she produced Figure 24. Fortunately another Arabic girl on the ward translated for me that this was one of the dolls of Paradise that they have at certain festivals. Notice, again, the horizontal bands on the dress. Now she seems to be idealizing the girl, making her pretty and bright, with blonde hair when Nazreen's hair was dark.

In what we knew would be her last meeting with me, for she was returning to Morocco the next day, without a prosthesis, she produced Figure 25. Here she has returned to the earlier, more ordinary girl, who looks quite serene, whose lack of a leg is hidden by the boat, which she said was the Ship of Allah. The kite is floating up to Paradise, it seems. I learned that she died 6 weeks later.

I will end with a quotation from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where we could as easily say 'artist', or 'child artist', as 'poet':

> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.

Figure 25: Nazreen's drawing of a girl whose missing leg is hidden by the boat, the Ship of Allah.

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# An object-relations theory of creativity: Fairbairn's theory of art in the light of his mature model of mind

GRAHAM CLARKE

## ABSTRACT

*Fairbairn's theory of art, written in the late 1930s and influenced by Klein, is outlined. Clues as to how he might have rewritten this theory in the light of his mature psychology of dynamic structure are sought in his later comments on the work of Marion Milner and Ernst Kris. Ken Wright's account of creativity and the self and his criticisms of Hanna Segal's approach to art are described. In the light of this, and using Padel's account of psychic growth within Fairbairn's theory, suggestions as to how Fairbairn's theory of art might be rewritten are made. The developed model can be seen to contain both Hanna Segal's (Kleinian) and Ken Wright's (Winnicottian) accounts of creativity as interdependent moments. A parallel between psychic growth and creativity is suggested.*

**Key words** art, creativity, Fairbairn, object relations, psychic change

## Introduction

In 1938 Fairbairn published two linked papers on art (Fairbairn, 1938a, 1938b) written within a broadly Freudian metapsychology with a significant contribution from Melanie Klein's theory of early aggressive fantasies. Two years later, during the Second World War, Fairbairn produced the first of the papers in which he formulated his own object-relations theory or 'psychology of dynamic structure' as he called it. When these and other papers were collected in *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality* (1952) Fairbairn chose *not* to include the art papers among them. Fairbairn did publish two critical notices on art

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(Fairbairn 1950, 1953), one on Marion Milner's *On Not Being Able to Paint* (Milner, 1950) and one on Ernst Kris' *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (Kris, 1952), and in each of these short notices he refers back to his papers on art in a manner that suggested that he thought they were worth developing. In the paper on Kris in particular, he gave some suggestions of how his pre-war theory of art might be amended in the light of his psychology of dynamic structure. I have suggested elsewhere (Clarke, 1994, 1995, 2003a, 2003b) that Fairbairn's psychology of dynamic structure might be used to analyse film and drama, with particular reference to the description of psychic growth in Fairbairn's mature theory developed by Padel (1991, 1994). It was in response to Ken Wright's (1995) Winnicottian view of creativity, based in a multiple-self model and critical of Segal's Kleinian account, that I came to see how Fairbairn's mature multiple-self model and Padel's description of psychic growth within that model could provide an account of creativity that would, in effect, be a rewriting of Fairbairn's theory of art in the light of his mature theory.

## Artistic activity

In the 'Prolegomena to a Psychology of Art' Fairbairn (1938a) begins by looking at art as a social phenomenon with four components – the artist, the percipient, the work of art, and technique. He dismisses both the work of art and technique as suitable places to begin his investigations, and notes that in the past the choice of the psychologist has usually fallen upon the percipient, with the consequence that the psychology of art has been largely a psychology of art appreciation. Fairbairn feels this approach has been barren even though it is more suitable to psychological investigation than artistic creation. He notes that, strictly speaking, art does not need an audience so that it is his first task to determine the nature of *artistic activity*, and, because the work of art is its outcome, this approach must also determine the nature of the work of art.

Fairbairn suggests that all activity can be classified into one of two types – activities undertaken for the satisfaction provided by the activities themselves and activities undertaken as a means of providing satisfactions independent of those inherent in the activities in question. He associates the former with the pleasure principle and fun and the latter with the reality principle and work. He says, 'pure artistic activity, which is free from all ulterior motives, is seen to fall automatically into the class of play activities' (Fairbairn, 1938a: 291).

He goes on to point out that artistic activity is also characterized by making something, not just doing something:

> a work of art is something that is made for fun; and, conversely anything that is made for fun must be regarded as a work of art. Art-appreciation consists in perceiving something that has been made for fun. And furthermore, aesthetic pleasure may be defined as the fun of perceiving something that has been made for fun. (Fairbairn, 1938a: 291)

Fairbairn is aware that this expands the field of art to a much wider set of activities than is common and comments on the culturally specific way in which

> the senses of sight and hearing are exalted at the expense of senses like taste and smell, which are more closely related to the libidinal gratifications of childhood, and, further, that this cultural process is intimately related to the process of repression in the individual mind. (Fairbairn, 1938a: 292)

Fairbairn sets out next 'to reach some understanding of the psychological significance of the work of art in terms of the psychology of the artist' (Fairbairn, 1938a: 293). He compares the work of art with the dream, and puts forward the notion of a 'process of "art-work", which performs a function in relation to the work of art similar to that performed by dream-work . . . art-work must be regarded as essentially unconscious' (Fairbairn, 1938a: 294). Like dream-work 'art-work . . . provides the means of reducing the psychical tension in the artist's mind by enabling the repressed urges to obtain some outlet and satisfaction without unduly disturbing his equanimity' (Fairbairn, 1938a: 294). He also notes that, like dream-work, art-work can fail and when it does both the equanimity of the artist and the quality of the work of art will suffer. He argues that the complexity of the art-work is determined by the relative strength of the repressed urges and the factors responsible for repression and concludes that 'there can be no doubt that art-work, like dream-work, is dependent upon repression, and that without repression no *high achievement* in art is possible' (Fairbairn, 1938a: 295; emphasis added).

Fairbairn goes on to review some psychoanalytic findings from an essentially Freudian point of view, and then introduces Melanie Klein's work on destructive fantasies. He starts by citing the findings of Freud on the life and death drives, which he refers to as the life principle and the denial of life principle. He points out that the coexistence of these two incompatible groups of impulses leads to mental conflict, particularly in early childhood, when libidinal and destructive impulses are directed towards the same person in the shape of the mother or primary care-giver:

> It is to deal with the anxiety and guilt engendered by destructive phantasies regarding love-objects that repression is originally instituted in childhood; and it is owing to the persistence of such phantasies in the unconscious that it is maintained in adult life. (Fairbairn, 1938a: 296)

He notes that this involves considerable repression of libido, and, because artistic activity is essentially creative, you would expect art to be determined by libidinal urges. Fairbairn discusses Klein's work on destructive fantasies and points out that she found that these were characteristically accompanied by compensatory fantasies of restitution, which arise as a means of alleviating the guilt and anxiety engendered by the destructive fantasies. The function of these

fantasies of restitution is to provide reassurance regarding the integrity of the threatened love-object, 'since the preservation and enhancement of its objects of attachment is the great concern of the libido' (Fairbairn, 1938a: 297). Fairbairn argues that we should regard fantasies of restitution as libidinal manifestations despite their owing their origin to the presence of destructive urges. He comments on the cultural importance of fantasies of restitution, which are at the root of notions of perfection and the ideal, and he goes on to argue that the principle of restitution is the governing principle in art. This is where his original argument is most like Segal's view that reparation is the governing principle of art.

Finally, Fairbairn reviews aspects of Freud's structural theory where the notion of the agent of repression was developed. He returns again to the concept of dream-work and says 'dream-work is . . . a function of the ego, which . . . modifies phantasies engendered by the instinctive id-impulses in deference to the demands of the superego' (Fairbairn, 1938a: 301). In this account dream-work is both negative and positive; not just a way of allowing hidden and unacceptable wishes some expression but also a positive gesture towards the superego:

> Art-work modifies repressed phantasies in such a way as to enable them to elude the vigilance of the superego and so to become available for embodiment in works of art . . . relieving the tension between the repressed impulses and the ego . . . art-work enables the ego to convert phantasies unacceptable to the superego into positive tributes to its authority and so relieves the tension existing between the ego and the superego. (Fairbairn, 1938a: 301)

Thus, 'art is . . . not only a sublimated expression of repressed urges, but also a means whereby positive values are created in the service of an ideal' (Fairbairn, 1938a: 302).

He rounds off the paper by returning to some of his opening remarks, saying again that, in so far as the act of restitution is determined by a need for the relief of inner tension, then the creation of a work of art can be regarded as 'making something for fun'. As to the artist's audience, in the light of the notion of restitution, it consists in the objects to whom restitution is made – in some cases real or fantasied external objects and in other cases internal objects represented in the artist's own superego.

### Aesthetic experience

In his second paper on art, 'The Ultimate Basis of Aesthetic Experience', Fairbairn (1938b) explains that the paper is a sequel to the 'Prolegomena . . .' and says it addresses the psychology of the beholder where the beholder is the subject of aesthetic experience.

> It is only when we seek our clue to the psychological significance of art in artistic activity (i.e. the motives of the artist) that it becomes possible to establish a definite criterion by which to differentiate between what is a work of art and what is not. Such a criterion is to be found, however, in the conclusion reached in my previous paper that anything that is 'made for fun' is a work of art. This conclusion, together with the conclusion that the work of art represents a tribute of restitution paid by the artist's ego to his superego, provides a means of surmounting the difficulties inherent in prevalent conceptions in aesthetics. (Fairbairn, 1938b: 168–169)

Fairbairn turns to Dali's notion of the surrealist object – that is, of objects functioning symbolically: 'the "found objects" of the Surrealist consist in external, and for the most part natural, objects, in the appearance of which he discovers a hidden symbolic significance, and which he therefore preserves and, so to speak, "frames"' (Fairbairn, 1938b: 170). What is interesting to Fairbairn about the found object is that it represents an intermediate point between the attitude of the artist and that of the beholder and that it also represents what he calls a *minimal work of art*.

Fairbairn uses this idea of the found object to speculate about the origins of art, quoting Herbert Read who had noted that many of the earliest cave drawings are based around a natural (rock) feature. Fairbairn believes that these natural features are comparable to found objects and suggests that the found object represents 'a union between the outer world of reality and the inner world of wish fulfilment' (Fairbairn, 1938b: 170–171). The natural feature, as found object, becomes the nucleus of the picture. The next step is to make a picture without a natural feature at its core.

Fairbairn considers the origins of a specific work of art. He describes the way in which Dali came to make *Visage Paranoiaque* on the basis of a postcard of an African village that he had mistakenly interpreted as a picture of a head by Picasso. Fairbairn considers the process of creating a work of art, and describes the following stages in this process. The artist is confronted with an object in which he discovers symbolic significance, a significance that is *not* inherent in the real nature of the object. Owing to this object possessing features enabling it to represent, for the artist, a fulfilment of his emotional needs – a 'wish fulfilment' – this is tantamount to the discovery of a new object. The artist seeks to perpetuate what he has found in a work of art. But because it represents a wish fulfilment it cannot exist apart from the act of discovery, it has been created by the discovery, and the discovery represents a creative act on the part of the artist. And so the artist embodies the discovery in a formal work of art. Fairbairn says that the process he has described 'may be taken to represent what happens in all artistic creation' (Fairbairn, 1938b: 172).

Because the emotional needs, which determine the significance of the 'found object' for the artist, are predominantly unconscious, there has to be a certain amount of disguise of the object, even for the Surrealists who want to bring the world of the unconscious into the world of reality. The comparative poverty of the art-work in surrealist works of art, Fairbairn argues, is evidence of

the relative failure of repression. In most schools of art it is usual for the ultimate significance of the 'found object' to be unconscious.

Fairbairn makes a general statement about artistic creation, which he describes as *the discovery and perpetuation of an object which symbolizes, for the artist, the fulfilment of unconscious emotional needs.* He goes on to describe aesthetic experience as follows: aesthetic experience represents a specific emotional reaction, which occurs when a symbolically significant object is discovered in the external world. Individuals vary both in terms of their emotional needs and in the amount of disguise necessary to enable an object to function symbolically for them – that is, to function as a 'found object' and not as an actual object. This helps us to appreciate the subjective character of aesthetic judgement.

Considering the world of art as a world of 'found objects', Fairbairn suggests that the artist is good at discovering such objects, at isolating them, framing them, and giving them permanence. And, that the role of the beholder is to discover these objects for him, or her, self. Fairbairn suggests, following Herbert Read, that an open mind is a prerequisite for this discovery and that in the discovery the beholder shares the experience of the artist and the satisfactions of aesthetic creation.

Fairbairn now considers the cases where aesthetic experience fails and asks why that might be. He focuses on the need for disguise and the extent to which the work of art may over- or under-symbolize its deeper significance. In the case of over-symbolization the censorship of the artist's superego is too exacting and the beholder makes no discovery. In the case of under-symbolization there is too little disguise, and this provokes a strong emotional reaction in any beholder whose superego is more exacting than the artist's, and who needs greater disguise of repressed urges under pressure of anxiety, so the beholder rejects the object with feelings of anger or disgust. Translating these findings into the discourse of form and content then, over-symbolization – the over-elaboration of the disguise – can be seen as form without content, and under-symbolization as content without form.[1]

Fairbairn then considers the work of art as a restored object, and suggests that the duality of satisfaction underlying aesthetic experience corresponds to the duality of satisfaction provided by artistic activity, which provides a means of expression for the repressed urges of the artist, and enables his ego to pay a tribute to the supremacy of his superego:

> in so far as the work of art consists in a tribute paid by the artist's ego to his superego, it essentially represents a means of restitution, whereby his ego makes atonement to his superego for the destruction implied in the presence of repressed destructive impulses. (Fairbairn, 1938b: 178)

For Fairbairn, the aesthetic appeal of a work of art for the beholder will depend on its capacity to represent a restitution – that is, when the object that presents

itself is not simply a found object, but also a restored object. Over-symbolization excludes the impression of destruction too rigorously and under-symbolization produces too great a sense of destruction. Fairbairn concludes the paper with a section on aesthetic theory, suggesting that, while what he calls perfectionist theories of aesthetics, represented by Aristotle, and expressionist theories of aesthetics, represented by Croce, might seem to be opposed, he argues, using tragedy as an example, that the need for order, symmetry and definiteness, and the need for the cathartic release of the emotions of pity and fear are both necessary. Therefore, unconscious destructive urges and a restored object are both necessary to aesthetics.

### Fairbairn on Marion Milner

In his critical notice on Marion Milner's *On Not Being Able to Paint* (Milner, 1950) Fairbairn gives a positive assessment of her work. In regard to sublimation (a point that he further develops in his critical notice on Kris) he says that it is refreshing to read a book on the psychological processes involved in art and never to come across the term 'sublimation'. He goes on to say that 'sublimation is, of course, a concept which has its roots in impulse psychology; and it is difficult to find a place for it in a psychology of object-relations' (Fairbairn, 1950: 72). In regard to his overall response to the book he says that Marion Milner's 'observations from inside regarding the mental processes involved in painting appear to confirm some of the conclusions which I recorded in two contributions to the psychology of art in 1938 on the basis of an objective approach' (Fairbairn, 1950: 72).

### Fairbairn on Ernst Kris

In Fairbairn's critical notice on Kris' *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (Kris, 1952) he commends the author for being 'no less concerned with what psychoanalysis can learn within the field of cultural studies than with what it can teach' (Fairbairn, 1953: 169), but regrets the fact that Kris has not attempted a general theory of art. Fairbairn notes that Kris makes a comparison between dreams and art, suggesting that there is 'art-work', like there is 'dream-work', and draws attention to his own similar suggestion in the 1938 art papers.

Fairbairn identifies the basic concept underlying all of Kris' investigations, as being derived from Freud's thinking about wit:

> in the case of art the ego remains in control of the primary process whilst permitting a regression to the level at which this process functions. The theme of such controlled regression to the level of primary process may be regarded as providing the basic concept underlying all the investigations recorded by Kris in the present volume. (Fairbairn, 1953: 165)

He argues that Kris believes that it is characteristic of the artist that he should be able to gain easy access to id material without being overwhelmed by it. And that the artist should be able to make rapid shifts from one level of psychic functioning to the other.

Fairbairn describes Kris' arguments concerning sublimation, and his attempt to clarify Freud's inconsistent use of the term, where Freud sometimes means the displacement of energy discharge from a socially unacceptable goal to an acceptable one, and sometimes means a transformation of the energy discharged. Fairbairn, however, uses this discussion to say more about the fact that the concept of sublimation presents considerable difficulties for those who:

> adopt a psychology of object-relations based upon the principle of dynamic structure. To those of this way of thinking, both the concept of the displacement of energy from a socially unacceptable to a socially acceptable goal and that of the transformation of energy itself assume a somewhat artificial complexion, since they imply an approach based upon a divorce of energy from structure. In terms of the principle of dynamic structure, the displacement of energy from a socially unacceptable to a socially acceptable goal would resolve itself, where the field of art is concerned, into a change in the relationships existing *between the artist and those objects who constitute society for him*; and similarly the transformation of energy would resolve itself into a complex change *(a) in the relationship of internally differentiated ego-structures not only with internal objects but also with one another, and (b) in the relationships of the conscious ego structure with external objects.* (Fairbairn, 1953: 167; emphasis added)

This means that Kris' concept of 'repression to the level of primary process' needs to be given an object relations interpretation. This is attempted in the last section of the paper. Fairbairn goes on to look at the consequences, for the concepts of primary and secondary process, of adopting his mature theory of dynamic structure:

> According to the principle of dynamic structure, it is not a case of a structural ego being differentiated under the pressure of the impact of external reality out of an original id which is relatively formless, so much as of an id being a structure with primitive characteristics which is differentiated from an original (and relatively primitive) ego-structure under the influence of repression; and it can be seen that once such a differentiation has occurred, the repressed id-structure will retain primitive features (and acquire exaggerations of such features under the influence of repression), while that part of the ego which remains conscious and in touch with external reality will be free to develop under the influence of relationships with external objects. . . The primary process will present itself as a characteristic feature of the activity of the repressed id-structure, and the secondary process as a characteristic feature of the activity of the conscious ego-structure; and the nature of artistic activity will then come to be described, not as an ego-controlled regression to the level of the primary process but rather as *an attempt to reconcile the primitive expression of a repressed id-structure with the requirements of a conscious ego-structure oriented towards external objects in a social milieu.* (Fairbairn, 1953: 167; emphasis added)

The Freudian distinction between primary and secondary process is understood by Fairbairn to represent the distinction between dynamic structures based on internalized relationships, some of which have been dissociated and repressed during infancy and are therefore 'primitive', and the dynamic structure he calls the central ego which can learn from experience. This is discussed in greater detail in the final section.

Fairbairn argues for the concept of artistic activity that he has already put forward in his papers on art:

> the reconciliation between the expression of the id-structure and the requirements of the conscious ego which it is the specific aim of the artist to establish is one accomplished through the specific activity of making (creating) things – and making them not primarily for utilitarian purposes, but . . . primarily 'for fun'. (Fairbairn, 1953: 168)

He goes on to argue that this conception of artistic activity finds a place for a scale of aesthetic values within it, absence of which has always been a weakness in psychoanalytic writings about art:

> the aesthetic failure of a work of art depends upon a comparative failure to effect the reconciliation to which reference has been made. Such failure may be brought about in either of two ways – either *through a failure on the part of the artist to make the expression of the id-structure conform sufficiently to the requirements of the conscious ego . . . or through the requirements of the conscious ego proving so exacting as to preclude the expression of the id-structure from endowing the work of art with a sufficiently dynamic quality to render it convincing* . . . These two types of failure have been described . . . elsewhere as 'under-symbolisation' and 'over-symbolisation'. (Fairbairn, 1953: 168; emphasis added)

Fairbairn ends by suggesting that what differentiates art from other activities is to be sought in the fact that the processes involved in art 'are manifested within the field of creation – in the act of making things in so far as these things are made, not for utilitarian purposes, but for the sake of making them viz. in so far as they are made (so to speak) for fun' (Fairbairn, 1953: 169).

### Sutherland's comments on Fairbairn's art papers

In his biography of Fairbairn, Sutherland (1989) comments on the art papers in some detail. He believes that Fairbairn was too much influenced by Melanie Klein's theories at the time that he wrote them. This influence was based mainly in Fairbairn's clinical experience of the reality of his patient's sadistic fantasies. Sutherland is critical of Klein: '[her] description of the depressive position has left us without an adequate account of what the new personalised self entails. Its creation and its subsequent creativity involved more specific understanding to be given of this process of restitution of a damaged object within a closed system' (Sutherland, 1989: 52).

Sutherland is also critical of the notion of 'making things for fun' which Fairbairn continued to see as central even after he had replaced a pleasure-seeking psychology with an object-seeking psychology. Sutherland suggests that he laid 'insufficient stress on the artist's products as gifts in perpetuity to fellow men' (Sutherland, 1989: 53) and that the satisfactions attendant on technical mastery are also undervalued: 'although he includes all the experience of making the restitution from the agony of emptiness and despair, the achievement of the satisfying object from intensely exacting work is what gives the artist and the appreciation the excitement of hope and creation surmounting the destructiveness' (Sutherland, 1989: 53).

Sutherland comments further that there is insufficient emphasis on the external reference for artistic activity. He cites Fairbairn's use of Herbert Read's notion of art as a 'solitary activity' and says that this 'detracts from this essential external reference in the "serious" elements of good art' (Sutherland, 1989: 50). He also thinks that there is an idealizing tendency in that 'the destruction-restitution thesis without the manifest product of its transmutation into the sharable realities of the process within the individual mind leaves us too much in the familiar territory of the philosophers, poets, writers and religious thinkers, namely the antinomy of good and evil' (Sutherland, 1989: 50), and that the real achievement of integration through the making of the object is also important: 'the artist shows that, however threatening the inner forces, they must be, and can be, faced and an integration achieved. This he does in the form given to the actual object he is driven to create' (Sutherland, 1989: 51).

In a passage that is written from within the perspective of Fairbairn's psychology of dynamic structure and whose conclusions prefigure key aspects of the conclusions of this paper, Sutherland comments that:

> the restitution from destruction at the personal level entails two tasks. *First there has to be worked through a full experience of the concern and the despair about being able to restore and preserve the good mother, internally and externally. The second task is the reciprocal preservation of the emergent self.* (Sutherland, 1989: 52; emphasis added)

The key point of this is to link the restoration of the destroyed object with the development of an integrated self. Having looked in some detail at the former already, we will now consider the latter from a Winnicottian point of view through Ken Wright's approach to art.

## Ken Wright's theory of artistic creativity

Ken Wright (1995) takes as his starting point what he calls 'a position statement by the Kleinian analyst, Hanna Segal'. His summary of Segal's position is as follows:

> In creating a work of art, the artist is not primarily engaged in a wish-fulfilling activity; he is working through significant inner conflicts and attempting to resolve them through the process of artistic creation. In order to do this, he does not escape from reality, inner or outer, but on the contrary, has to be deeply in touch with them. He also has to find a means of representing this reality in a truthful way, so that he may awaken in the observer a similar constellation of experience to that which exists in him while he is creating. (Wright, 1995: 6–7)

He argues that the requirement for truthful representation means that art is a symbolic activity and it is the symbolic nature of art that allows the viewer to share in the creative experience. He also notes that, by arguing that the 'significant form' of the art object symbolizes an *unconscious* content, Segal avoids any clash between formalist and content-oriented approaches to art because these operate at a manifest level.

Wright says that he is in broad agreement with this approach and identifies the problem he has with Segal's argument as coming from its 'Kleinian twist'. According to Segal the artist is not just creating significant forms that give symbolic expression to elements of his inner life. 'He is re-creating objects which, in his inner world of phantasy, he has damaged or destroyed' (Wright, 1995: 7). In short, the key problem for Segal is the artist's destructiveness. Under this description the art-object is what Fairbairn called a 'restored object' and the making of the object is a reparative act.

For Segal (1990), then, the significant form symbolized in a work of art is the reconstructed whole object, which was previously damaged or fragmented, and the whole of artistic activity is related to this 'core depressive conflict'. Wright finds this unconvincing and goes on to quote Segal further, as she opens up what seems to him to be a new theme: 'there is a longing to create an ideal state of mind and objects before what is felt as the havoc of the depressive position. Often the search is to regain a lost and unattainable ideal' (Wright, 1995: 9). In relation to this new theme Segal refers to the work of Adrian Stokes. She says that Stokes 'makes the . . . very convincing point that part of the difficulty in art is that *it is to satisfy both the longing for an ideal object and a self merged with it, with the need to restore a whole object realistically perceived, a separate mother not merged with the self*' (Segal, 1990: 98; emphasis added).

Wright points out that Segal's final account of the creative process therefore includes 'the attempt to create and merge with an ideal, maternal object' (Wright, 1995: 10) which belongs to an earlier stage of development than the depressive position. He is convinced that the project of creativity has much more to do with the search for a lost and unattainable ideal than Segal allows and he spends the rest of the paper discussing an approach that takes this view seriously. This takes him back to an area of preverbal experience as seen through the 'eyes of Winnicott and a newer breed of psychoanalyst, who have observed mothers and their small babies interacting together, with fewer, or at least different preconceptions than Klein about what they should see' (Wright, 1995: 8).

Wright asks what might be 'significant' to the baby and suggests that it is the mother's face, not her breast, that is the most 'significant form' in the infant's early experience. In particular he argues that it is the first and most important visual object in the infant's early experience and that 'a closer consideration of the mother's face and its role in infant experience, may help us to form some new ideas about the nature and function of creativity' (Wright, 1995: 10).

After a careful and sensitive review of the relationship between the infant and its mother, or primary caregiver, and the role that the mother's face might play, he states:

> Its changing and evanescent configurations, which eventually we come to think of as expressions, begin to acquire meanings that are linked, not only to those configurations, but also to relatively specific inner feeling states of the infant. This has led me to think of the mother's face as a kind of waystage in the infant's passage towards symbolic understanding. From this point of view, we can think of her face as a generator of protosymbols for the infant. (Wright, 1995: 14)

This experience of the mother's face as a significant and expressive visual object underpins some elements of aesthetic experience for Wright, who makes the striking suggestion that 'when we look at pictures, we are still looking at this centrally important and loved object of infancy – the mother's face – and reading and being moved by its changing configurations'[2] (Wright, 1995: 14).

Wright goes on to compare faces and paintings and asks what it is that *paintings* do for people. In order to throw some light on this he first asks what *faces* do for people and refers directly to Winnicott's paper, 'Mirror role of mother and family in child development' (1967). Winnicott argues that the 'precursor of the mirror is the mother's face'. Wright suggests that the mother's expression provides a visual analogue of the baby's internal states and as such provides an embryonic 'objectification of subjectivity'. He then wonders whether the artist 'uses the picture he is painting in ways that are similar to those in which the infant uses the mother's face' (Wright, 1995: 18), and suggests that viewers use paintings in much the same way – 'like a mirror that responds to the self' (Wright, 1995: 18). He goes on to ask what it is that is 'picked up, contained and given back by the reflective forms of a painting' (Wright, 1995: 18), and suggests that we might think of a painting as a 'quasi-personal responding object'. Wright suggests that:

> what we call 'significant form' in a painting is form that picks up and resonates with aspects of the self. Its 'inevitable sequences' are felt to be inevitable precisely because they resonate with and objectify, like the mother's response, what is already felt to be there in the self. (Wright, 1995: 19)

He clarifies what he means by self, by referring to the 'central affective core' of a person, and then, following Winnicott, goes on to consider what happens when the baby is angry and screaming and faced with a mother who cannot

accept this aspect of the baby's self. Wright argues that it is unlikely that this aspect of the self will be mirrored and confirmed, but that it will be relegated into an area of 'bad' or unwanted selves, which are not integrated into the larger self, which is 'underpinned and contained within the mother's area of mirroring acceptance' (Wright, 1995: 20). He suggests that this area of relegated selves might be part of what we mean by the unconscious.[3] These selves continue to exist but 'they are not under the control of the central ego' (Wright, 1995: 21). Wright goes on to suggest that one of the projects of art is to create a new place to be for such repudiated and unmirrored elements of the self, and that one way in which this might be done is for the artist to create forms that mirror or echo these split-off selves. In short, that the artist 'provides the maternal reflecting function which had been deficit' (Wright, 1995: 21) and in such a way that the 'wayward and "lost" elements of the self are able to be retrieved and gathered in within the project of the work of art, and given the place to be which they might have had, if the early maternal responses had been more flexible and accommodating' (Wright, 1995: 21).[4]

For Segal it is the whole object that is being restored in creative activity, whereas for Wright it is lost aspects of the self that are being restored.

## Fairbairn's theory of art in the light of his mature theory of dynamic structure

Fairbairn's theory of art modified by his mature theory, and interpreted according to Padel's theory of psychic growth (1994: 296–97), can be seen to offer a theory that combines both Segal's and Wright's approaches. These appear as moments in such a theory. This entails a reconstruction of the self on a more realistic basis (the central ego becomes expanded by (re)integrating previously split-off aspects from subsidiary selves), and a modification of the ego ideal in the direction of a less limited, more whole, internal object (the ideal object is reconstituted on the basis of the increased realistic powers available as a consequence of the changes in the central ego).

If we return to Fairbairn's comments on Kris and in particular his reconstruction of the terms sublimation and the primary and secondary processes, we can begin to rewrite Fairbairn's theory of art in terms of his theory of dynamic structure.

Sublimation – the change from socially unacceptable to socially acceptable goals in the field of art – involves a 'change in the relationship between the artist and those objects who constitute society for him' (Fairbairn, 1953: 165) and this is related to a complex change '(a) in the relationship of internally differentiated ego-structures not only with internal objects but also with one another, and (b) in the relationships of the conscious ego-structure with external objects' (Fairbairn, 1953: 165). In terms of the mature theory, the internal dynamic between the central ego and its ideal object and the libidinal ego/object and the antilibidinal ego/object is directly related to the relationship

between the central ego/ideal object and external reality. Changes in one will produce changes in the other.

In his discussion of the primary and secondary process Fairbairn continues to use a language of 'repressed id-structures' when he means the libidinal and antilibidinal ego/object pairs. His 'conscious ego-structure' is the central ego and its associated ideal object. Primary process becomes 'the primitive expression of a repressed id-structure' (Fairbairn, 1953: 167) – that is, of the libidinal and antilibidinal ego/object, which are split off early on in development and have all the hallmarks of early experience and affect. The secondary process is a manifestation of 'a conscious ego-structure oriented towards external objects in a social milieu' (Fairbairn, 1953: 167) – that is, the central ego and its ideal object, which in Fairbairn's model of inner reality is reality oriented.

Therefore the idea of 'regression to primary process thinking' becomes the activation of dynamic structures that are primitive because they have been unable to learn from experience, having been dissociated and repressed during infancy. Accessing and working over the content of these repressed structures is the source of psychic growth in Padel's understanding of Fairbairn's mature theory (the central self grows at the expense of the split-off and repressed subsidiary selves). Fairbairn was what Grotstein and Rinsley (1994) have called a 'deficit theorist' – that is, changes in the environment are more likely to produce psychic change – change in the configuration of the dynamic structures that constitutes inner reality – than vice versa. However, the artist is, as Fairbairn stresses, a maker of objects par excellence, so there is a particularly intimate relationship between the attempts to make something and the real responses and limitations of external reality. It is through this intimate dialectic between the limitations of external reality and the malleability of dynamic structures that creativity and psychic growth manifest themselves. I want to suggest that at best *creativity and psychic growth are coeval*, that this is what we mean when we talk about great art, that somehow a work of art has managed to encapsulate, embody or rehearse a moment of psychic growth in a way that is shareable.

In Fairbairn's theory of art the function of the superego is significant; it is to the superego that the ego pays tribute. In his mature theory the superego has become more complex: 'what Freud described as a "superego" is really a complex structure comprising (a) the ideal object or ego ideal, (b) the antilibidinal ego, and (c) the rejecting (or antilibidinal) object' (Fairbairn, 1963: 224–225). Given the nature of the antilibidinal ego/object it is clear that this is the source of the tyrannical version of the superego that needs to be ameliorated if psychic growth is to be possible. If we were to update Fairbairn's theory of art in the light of his mature theory, we would have to replace the idea that the ego pays tribute to the superego by the notions that the antilibidinal ego/object prevents aspects of the libidinal ego/object from becoming integrated into the central ego and that the central ego pays tribute to the ideal object. But what in this model is the ideal object? It is the repository of all

positive values that have become associated with the acceptable part of the originally introjected object. In psychic growth the central ego and the ideal object become expanded by the integration of elements from the libidinal and antilibidinal selves. The scope for thought and action, for aspirations and ideals, is expanded, and, given the nature of the ideal object, it is fair to say that the original object is partially reconstructed, made more whole than it was before. There is a move towards the ideal object becoming more like the original object before it was shorn of its over-exciting and over-rejecting aspects. So Padel's account of psychic growth, in one of its aspects, involves the recreation of a more whole ideal object. This is directly comparable to the idea that Segal discusses and Wright uses as a starting point for his speculations: 'often the search is to regain a lost and unattainable ideal' (Segal, 1990: 98).

The other side of Padel's account is dependent on integrating aspects of the self from the libidinal and antilibidinal selves – that is, from selves that have been relegated or denied; dissociated aspects of the self that form alternative loci for activity and perspective. It is by reclaiming aspects of these subsidiary selves that the central ego and its ideal object are able to grow. This aspect of the process is akin to the view that Wright put forward. So, a Fairbairnian model of psychic growth, as developed by John Padel, can be argued to contain the theories of both Hanna Segal and Ken Wright as moments – moments that are inextricably linked and interdependent in Padel's account of psychic growth. *As the subsidiary selves become incorporated into the central ego and its ideal object, so the self becomes more whole (reintegrated), and the ideal object becomes more like the original object at a new level of reality and realism.*

## Conclusion

Padel's account of psychic growth in Fairbairn's mature model of mind allows us to reinterpret Fairbairn's art papers to produce an object relations theory of creativity. This theory of creativity can be seen to contain within it both Kleinian and Winnicottian moments – restored objects and reintegrated selves.

In order to move towards a unified object relations theory of creativity we would also need to consider the work of contemporary Freudian Ismond Rosen (1974), who produced a similar Freudian theory, and the Ehrenzweig (1967)–Milner view of creativity, whose component stages – projected schizoid fragments, the 'manic womb' and the integrative assimilation of previously rejected content in a socially acceptable form – all have direct parallels with Padel's account of psychic growth in Fairbairn's mature psychology of dynamic structure.

## Notes

1. Responses to exhibitions like the 'Sensations' exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1998 might be seen in this context.

2. As Freud also says in his essay on Leonardo da Vinci.
3. This model of a central self and unconscious subsidiary selves is consistent with Fairbairn's mature theory.
4. The retrieval of lost elements of the self and their (re)integration into the central self is consistent with Padel's description of psychic growth in Fairbairn's mature theory.

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# CLASSICS REVISITED

# Donald Meltzer, 'The relation of anal masturbation to projective identification'*

MARY ADAMS

## Introduction

Donald Meltzer's paper is considered a classic among the wider analytic community in its discussion of the role of anality and projective identification in the development of what he calls the pseudo-mature personality. This concept is similar to Winnicott's 'as if' personality and Deutsch's 'false self', but Meltzer's focus is on the link with the fantasied entry into the internal world of the internal object in a particularly concrete way. The paper describes how this can develop from a child's hatred of dependence and attempt to manage on his own, denying the reality of being a child, and how these characteristics manifest in the analytic relationship. Although considered a classic, the paper is difficult in the breadth of ideas it covers and in the novelty of the picture it presents of the inner world. Perhaps most difficult to grasp is the specific kind of projective identification that he is describing – a projective identification with the *internal* object, an *intrusive* identification, in fact, with the fantasied intrusion taking place primarily through the anus.

Written in 1966, the paper follows Melanie Klein's (1946) introduction to the concept of projective identification and Paula Heimann's (1962) work on anality. It is ranked, along with three other major works – Bion's 'Attacks on linking' (1959), Rosenfeld's 'Contribution to the psychopathology of psychotic states' (1971) and Joseph's 'Projective identification: some clinical aspects' (1987) – as a landmark in Kleinian thinking about projective identification. 'Meltzer's paper', says Elizabeth Spillius, 'describes the phantasies of projective

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identification with internal parents expressed in and accompanied by anal masturbation, leading to denigration of parental functions and to denial of dependence on internal parents, and thus to false independence and "pseudo-maturity" in the individual' (Spillius, 1988: 85).

Beyond this, it is a paper that paves the way for Meltzer's subsequent contribution, much of which is not as well known. I am thinking particularly of his work on the 'claustrum' – that is, the dwelling place of this kind of pseudo-mature individual; his attention to the reality of internal space; and his work on delusional identification. Meltzer takes us right inside the internal world discovered by Klein. As he recently put it, 'My contribution . . . has consisted of an invasion of a space that is really a mythological space – the unconscious' (Meltzer, 2003: 315). More concretely, perhaps, his contribution has been to paint a fascinating picture of internal space and the significance of what he calls the geographical compartments of the fantasy internal mother. His 'invasion' into internal space begins in his 1966 paper with an exploration of the anal geography and related fantasies.

Klein, he says, tended to treat projective identification as a 'psychotic mechanism' which operated mainly with external rather than internal objects (Meltzer, 1992: 29–30). Meltzer, who later described projective identification as 'the most important and most mysterious concept in psychoanalysis', saw this particularly intrusive kind as an essentially anal process (anal suggesting an expelling of unwanted bits of the self) (Meltzer, 1978a: 459). In fact, he came to call it 'intrusive identification' to clarify the pathology involved and to distinguish it from the kind of projective identification (an unconscious form of communication) described by Bion (Meltzer et al., 1986: 66–69).

From Meltzer's own work with children, particularly their play and dreams, he and his colleagues discovered that anal masturbation was more common than previously thought:

> Entry into projective identification is a ubiquitous phenomenon in early childhood mainly instituted during conflicts over excretory processes and implemented through phantasies of penetrating masturbatory activities, especially anal masturbation. (Meltzer, 1992: 118)

Most debilitating for the pseudo-mature personality is the fragile omnipotence which seeks constant bolstering, the kind of bolstering that masturbation and projective identification provide. Meltzer describes masturbation as deriving its urgency and compulsive force from its capacity to generate omnipotence. In other words, the masturbation is not merely for sexual excitement but to transport the individual into a delusory state of mind, to avoid feelings of loneliness, inadequacy and persecution, for example. Projective identification, too, he describes as being driven by fantasies of omnipotent control (Meltzer, 1992: 30–32).

Meltzer claims that anal masturbation, for both the male and the female child, is often accompanied by the fantasy of entering the mother through the anus. The fantasy represents the wish to enter inside the mother, control her, be her. In this way the child can erase both his dependence on her and any adult/child differences between them. This is an area that Chasseguet-Smirgel writes about, for example, in *Creativity and Perversion* (1985), but Meltzer focuses specifically on the reality of the internal world into which entry is sought.

In a discussion of Freud's 'Wolf Man' paper, Meltzer (1978) gives us two quotes showing how close Freud came to conceptualizing an inner world when talking about the child's wish to be inside the mother:

> There is a wish to be inside the mother's womb in order to replace her during intercourse – in order to take her place in regard to the father. (Freud, 1918, S.E. 17: 101)

> There is a wish to be back in a situation in which one was in the mother's genitals; and in this connection the man is identifying himself with his own penis. (Freud, 1918, S.E. 17: 102)

Meltzer says:

> If [Freud] had just made this step [of developing the concept of an inner world] he could have leapt forward the way Melanie Klein's work leapt forward the moment she discovered that children were preoccupied with the inside of their mothers' bodies and that it was really a *place*, a world in which life was going on. . . . But he seems somehow unable to come to any such conception at this point; that is, to take the primal scene and find a location for it by placing it inside. And I think the reason was that he just did not have that kind of mind; it took somebody like Mrs Klein, listening to little children talking about the inside of the mother's body with absolute conviction as if it were Budapest or Vienna as an absolutely geographical place, to realise that there really is an inner world and that it is not just allegorical or metaphorical, but has a concrete existence – in the life of the mind, not the brain. (Meltzer, 1978: 97–98; emphasis in original)

What is so key in Meltzer's approach is this notion of the concreteness of the internal world for the child, and the consequences of a fantasied entry into the inner world this way. It is concrete in the sense that for the child the inner world is real, as real, for example, as the world that children enter in their play. The problem arises when the child becomes unable to move into *and out of* that concrete world and becomes trapped in it.

Like Chasseguet-Smirgel, Meltzer shows how an idealization of the anus and faeces leads to the self-idealization, the denigration of the object and the denial of difference. The danger in this is the way it can be used by the child to bypass Oedipal conflict. This kind of pseudo-mature child develops into a pseudo-adult, not used to emotional contact, afraid of real feelings and with no safe

place to take the fear. With the child's focus on entering inside the object, the internal space can become a prison, a claustrophobic trap, rather than a safe containing space.

One of Meltzer's great contributions is the multifaceted picture he gives of this inner space, how the infant inhabits it, gets confused and claustrophobic in it, tries to control the object by being in it, and at times is trapped within it, becoming what he calls a 'claustrum dweller'. This impulse to enter inside and control the object is linked with the anal phase of development that Paula Heimann had brought to prominence again in her influential 1962 paper. In it she contrasts narcissism versus object relating at the anal stage. The significance of the anal phase she sees as lying in the fact that in this period the infant experiences the major clash between his narcissism and his object-relatedness:

> The anatomical position of the anal zone is dorsal, distal, and hidden. It therefore lies outside the infant's social contact with his mother, which no less than adult social encounters essentially depends on the confrontation of the partakers. Anal excitations begin and take their course independently of any help on the part of the mother, and both the somatic function and the libidinal pleasures derived from it are regulated by the infant in an autonomous manner. In respect of both aspects of the anal experience, the principle of the anaclitic development of the libido and of object love does not apply to the anal function, as it does to the oral function. Primarily anal urges are not suitable for the establishment or the cementing of object-relationship. For anality the object is redundant, if not worse, and we know from direct and from analytic observation that interventions with or rather intrusions into the anal function are registered as attacks. (Heimann, 1962: 409)

As she pointed out, attention to the anal stage had been somewhat neglected in the psychoanalytic literature of the previous two decades. A revival of interest followed the transformation in thinking that Klein's work with children brought about. Only with her discovery of an internal world, peopled by objects with as alive and powerful a presence as external objects, could there be a real understanding of object relating and the phenomenon of projective identification.

Meltzer's 1966 paper is unusual for him in that it includes hardly any child material, although it is clearly informed by his work with children. It is a treatise on delusional identification, based on the infant's fantasies of intrusion into the object. He gives the following hypothetical picture of how the delusional identification with the mother can come about – an example of the kind of imaginative conjecture that he relies on both in his writing and in the consulting room.

> . . . after a feed, when placed in the cot, as mother walks away, the baby, hostilely equating mother's breasts with her buttocks, begins to explore its own bottom, idealizing its roundness and smoothness and eventually penetrating the anus to reach the retained, withheld faeces. In this process of penetration, a fantasy of secret intrusion into mother's

> anus (Abraham, 1921, p.389) to rob her takes shape, whereby the baby's rectal contents become confused with mother's idealized faeces, felt to be withheld by her to feed daddy and the inside-babies. (Meltzer, 1966: 336)

One can see in some of Meltzer's collaborative writing how analytic work with children helps to fill out the rather stark descriptions in the 1966 paper. For example, to give more of a sense of a child's fantasized intrusion into the mother/therapist, in terms of anal and genital fantasies, Meltzer offers us elsewhere a colleague's description of a 3-year-old patient, Piffie, entering her consulting room:

> . . . the very literal way he experiences putting himself into my body was shown by the routines he developed for entering the house and making his way to my upstairs consulting room. On entering the house he would make a plunging dive onto the floor. He would then crawl slowly and painfully upstairs pushing his head against each step and saying 'Come and help me push these plop-plop steps away.' Or frequently he would take out a stair-rod and beat each step, saying 'Baby, baby', or hold the stick in front of his penis and use it to thrust his way into the room. Just before entering the room he sometimes knelt and spun around as if he were a drill, saying, 'Mummy-hole' and then twiddle his hands round and round, saying, 'Wee-wee hole'. (Meltzer et al., 1975: 168; see also: 'The sorting of the geographical confusions', in Meltzer, 1992: 34–36)

Particularly helpful in conjunction with the 1966 paper is Meltzer's 1986 collaborative paper, 'The conceptual distinction between projective identification (Klein) and container-contained (Bion)', which makes the distinction between pathological (intrusive) identification and normal (projective) identification and between his concept of *the claustrum* and Bion's *container*. Bion's picture of normal projective identification functioning as a means of communication with the containing object – the container as 'the chamber of maiden thought' – contrasts strikingly with the omnipotent control, and pseudo-communication, characteristic of intrusive identification. With its child clinical material, the 1982 paper beautifully illustrates these differences (pp. 66–69).

### The analytic process

As well as describing how pathological projective identification with internal objects is induced by anal masturbation and giving us a sense of the concreteness of the space of the internal world and the infant's interaction with and within it, Meltzer's 1966 paper discusses the special, painstaking nature of analytic work with such patients, the first task being to help them emerge from their 'claustrum' world. With the adult patient dreams can help reveal the anal nature and the pseudo/fraudulent quality of the relating. He gives a detailed list of examples of how anality and anal eroticism appears in dreams. For example: idealization of the faeces as food; idealization of the rectum and the toilet situation; representation

of the anally masturbating fingers; dreams showing the process of intrusion into the anus of the object – most frequently seen as entering a building or a vehicle, either furtively, by a back entrance (Meltzer, 1966: 337).

Meltzer says:

> While patients are living in projective identification you do not know them. The world they are living in is different from the world that you, as a sane person, are living in, but the personality of such patients is different, adapted to the grotesque world of projective identification. (Meltzer, 2000: 3)

And he gives a lively description of this world in his book, *The Claustrum* (1992: 97–107).

Interpretations have little impact on the patient in this phase of analysis unless coupled with describing to the patient the kind of world he, or part of him, is living in. At this point the analytic task is observation and description – while waiting on the outside, not joining the patient in his delusional place:

> The analyst will find himself restricted to the role of a kind of tour guide around the claustrum, demonstrating from the patient's behaviour, his dreams and his anecdotal stories both the qualities of the interior world whose compartment he inhabits, his anxieties, manifest and incipient, and his modes of adaptation, in and out of the consulting room. (Meltzer, 1992: 105)

The analyst needs to be vigilant, to 'tune into the music of insincerity' that appears, and not be seduced by the false maturity and the patient's seeming cooperation. Trapped in his world of lies, the patient does everything to avoid making real contact. Staying with the analytic task of pointing out the lies and the acting out meets with fury and resistance of the 'nothing-I-ever-do-pleases-you-variety' and the patient is at risk of leaving the analysis altogether (Meltzer, 1966: 337).

> For the analyst this stage is like seeing the same C-grade movie over and over again. . . . It loses its punch in spite of the beauty of the actors and actresses and scenery. (Meltzer, 2000: 4)

### From 'toilet-breast' to 'feeding breast'

Meltzer conceptualizes the analyst's role with claustrum patients in terms of the way they use the object and where geographically in the mother they are located, as seen in the transference and revealed both in their behaviour and in their dreams. The analyst's work at the early stage he calls the 'toilet-breast' function, where the analyst is viewed by the patient as a receptacle for getting rid of the unpleasant, unwanted bits, rather than as a source of goodness. Meltzer, again, gives us a child example:

> In its most concrete form with children actual urination and defecation, using the toilet or, unfortunately on occasions, the consulting room takes place. Most striking is the change in demeanour of the child at start and finish of such sessions, the relief mixed with contempt with which, without a goodbye, he cheerfully leaves, in contrast with the frantic and disorganised bursting-in type of entry. (1992: 39–40)

What is required with both child and adult patients is, as the opportunity arises in the patient's material, to call attention to the omnipotence and lies, pointing out the confusions (such as confusions of identity and generational differences) which result from excessive projective (intrusive) identification. As the analyst helps the patient to bear the psychic pain involved, what he calls 'the feeding breast' transference develops:

> With this the feeding-breast transference breaks through the restrictions imposed upon it by the idealization-of-the-faeces. Full-blown, painful and analytically fruitful experiences of separation anxiety become possible for the first time.
>
> . . . The early years of analysis in such cases involve primarily the resolution of the self-idealization and spurious independence, through the establishment of the capacity in the transference to utilize the analytic breast for projective relief (the toilet-breast). It is only after several years, when the attachment to the feeding breast is developing and the intolerance to separations is rhythmically being invoked at week-ends and holidays that these processes can be accurately and fruitfully investigated. It seems certain that, unless the cryptic anal masturbation can be discovered and its insidious production of aberrant ego states scotched at source, further progress is seriously impeded. (Meltzer, 1966: 339)

When talking about the countertransference experienced with such patients, Meltzer describes the analyst's position as extremely difficult since the pseudo-cooperation and underlying fragility of the patient makes one reluctant to challenge him:

> It in every way repeats the dilemma of the parents, who found themselves with a 'model' child, so long as they abstained from being distinctly parental, either in the form of authority, teaching, or opposition to the relatively modest claims for privileges beyond those to which the child's age and accomplishments could reasonably entitle it. (Meltzer, 1966: 340)

The analyst's first task is to help the patient discover how he got into this state of mind, calling attention to the mechanisms (such as omnipotence and denial) as they occur in the sessions. What gradually falls away is the identificatory aspect of projective identification – the part that denies the separateness of the object, the grandiosity, the narcissism. As the grandiosity gets eroded, the sense for the patient of being imprisoned in a state of mind without knowing how to get out of it begins to diminish:

> Once the patient does begin to emerge – although they oscillate and run back in as soon as they can, because what they meet when they come out is rather terrible depression and a

> sense of wasted time in their lives, and 'it's too late for this' and 'too late for that' – then the patient becomes able to cooperate and interested in analytic work – and *that* is really where the pleasure lies, in the sense of cooperation. (Meltzer, 2000: 2; emphasis in original)

Meltzer describes how, as the patient moves towards the depressive position, the path is not easy or direct and at this point obsessionality often becomes evident. The focus, however, shifts from separation anxieties towards the bypassed Oedipal conflicts where those conflicts can be thought about in a more whole object way (1966: 336).

In his 1966 paper Meltzer includes two pieces of adult clinical material. One is from early in an analysis in which rich dream material shows the self-idealization (through athletics), and the 'cryptic' nature of the fantasies linked with anal masturbation – that is, the unconscious skill that hides them from scrutiny. The toilet-breast function at this stage is acknowledged by the patient in his description of the way he is 'churning out fantasies' – implying a meaningless cooperation with the analyst. The second clinical example is taken from later in an analysis where the analyst is being used more as a feeding-breast. Now an alliance to good objects is developing internally and the patient is beginning to be able to combat his old anal habits. But it also shows how Oedipal struggles in the transference easily send him back to anal preoccupations.

### References to the paper in the psychoanalytic literature

Meltzer's 1966 paper, although regularly referred to in the psychoanalytic literature, does not seem to be much discussed by other authors except those who work with children and who are frequently confronted with the consequences of anal masturbation, concretely and in fantasy. Bion refers to it in *Second Thoughts* when discussing the pseudo-mature individual in a training analysis (Bion, 1967: 126). Money-Kyrle, in his own classic paper 'The aim of psychoanalysis', refers to Meltzer's paper when discussing the child's difficulty in viewing the parents' intercourse as a supremely creative act:

> The baby who has been kept waiting too long in relation to his own capacity to wait and whose memory and expectation of the good breast begins to be destroyed will begin to be lured by an even earlier memory which seems never to be entirely lost – that of the interuterine condition. Quite often, as Meltzer has pointed out (1966), this is linked with the discovery and exploration of his own bottom, which both resembles the breast in shape and also seems to provide an entry into the kind of place from which he dimly remembers that he came. The result is a most confused and complicated state in which in fact he is in touch with a substitute for the breast and in projective identification with it inside it. (Money-Kyrle, 1971: 104–105)

In the following examples with adult patients the anal masturbation is quite overt and it is not clear how much the analyst had to work at uncovering it early in the treatment. Hanna Segal, in her paper 'On symbolism',

gives a case illustration in which a finger in a dream is associated to anal masturbation:

> His anal masturbation was always associated with violent projective identification into the anus of the analyst/mother, as described by Meltzer (1966). We understood that the motor cycles outside the window represented his own intrusive self, identified with his finger and penis, projected into an external object, the motor cycle of my son identified with it, and intruding into him. (Segal, 1978: 317)

Robert Caper illustrates the literal use of anal masturbation as a denigration of the object. His patient, he says:

> was addicted to anal masturbation, often using a carrot. Despite a paucity of conscious associations to these masturbatory activities, it gradually became clear that he felt very guilty and persecuted about it, and a review of the material seemed to indicate that it represented his way of taking in food in general – whether mother's breast as an infant or the analyst's interpretations as an adult. He covered them with shit while at the same time exciting himself through his misuse of them – a triumphant, envious devaluation of the object that he needed. (Caper, 1998: 543)

For references to anal masturbation in women patients, see Richard Alexander (1981) and Sally Weintrobe (2004).

Meltzer's descriptions of the vicissitudes of the self-deluding acting out of the pseudo-mature patient and the pressure put on the analyst to collude convey how difficult it is to stay with the analytic task. This kind of patient is so ready to be 'found out', and humiliated in the process, that the analyst is easily made to feel cruel and uncaring. I have written about just such a patient who left treatment after two years (Adams, 1999). The patient could certainly describe for me his sense of fraudulence and fear of exposure, but allowing me to describe anything for him seemed too threatening in his fragile omnipotent state. This dilemma is addressed in Caper's paper:

> The problem for the analyst is not just an intellectual one, but an emotional one as well. These operations are defences against the considerable pain, anxiety and feelings of smallness that the patient experiences when his unconscious delusions are brought into proper register with reality through an accurate interpretation. The analyst may himself resist making interpretations that cause such evident pain out of an understandable but short-sighted reluctance to be the bearer of painful news for his patient. This resistance may eventually become institutionalised in the form of fallacious theories that create the appearance of analytic insight while allowing the analyst to evade drawing the patient's attention to the painful awareness that he is deluded and has been incapable, in the area covered by the delusions, of learning from his previous experiences. (Caper, 1998: 544)

Meltzer's 1966 paper describes with startling vividness the characteristics of and treatment difficulties with the 'claustrum' patient. It is a classic paper in its new insights but it is written in a very condensed way. It is in his subsequent

writing, however, that the picture of intrusive identification is expanded, brought to life and becomes clinically more meaningful.

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# ARTS REVIEW

# Eva Hesse's art and life

ARNA DAVIS

> I am interested in solving an unknown factor of art and unknown factor of life
> My life and art have not been separated. They have been together.
> (Hesse, 1970[1])

The Tate Modern exhibition (13 November 2002–9 March 2003) was the first major show in the UK of works by Eva Hesse, and included a number of exhibits that had never been seen here before. Having a few years ago, during my fine art studies, spent some time looking into Hesse's art and her diary notes, the exhibition gave me a chance to see – from photos – familiar works for real. As I walked from room to room, the intensity, the fragile vulnerability, the courageous originality, humour and vivaciousness of Hesse's art came alive; her story began to relive in my mind (Davis, 1994).

Eva Hesse (11 January 1936–29 May 1970) was one of the first women artists to gain international recognition in the 1960s. Several facts have contributed to her near-mythical status in the history of contemporary American art: her early death at the age of 34 from a brain tumour, her success as a female artist pushing forward her own ideas – filtering them through her personal sensibilities, and, added to this, she produced a unique and highly individualistic body of work at a time when American art was dominated by men with little political awareness of feminist issues.

Laura Cumming, in her review of the exhibition (*Observer*, 17 November 2002), claimed that too much has been made of Hesse's life story, making her some kind of a martyr. She did not see Hesse's work as autobiographical and argued that details of Hesse's life are irrelevant to the appreciation of her art. Of course this is true, if one wants to look at Hesse's pioneering work in the context of the 1960s American art scene, in its transition from painting and Abstract Expressionism into a new era of three-dimensional forms and minimalism. Hesse was recognized as a brilliant artist, using original ideas, and

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at the same time absorbing the influences of Surrealism, Conceptualism and Minimalism, and expressing collective concerns in a highly personal way. However, in this paper, I will suggest that an aspect of Eva Hesse's work has also a highly autobiographical significance. My intention is to explore the tangled and intertwined connections of Eva Hesse's life and art by looking at a handful of her 'psychic models', as Robert Smithson described Hesse's artwork: 'She had no external notion of a world outside of hers. I saw her as a very interior person making psychic models' (Lippard, 1976: 6). I am suggesting that the timing of making these 'psychic models' was part of the process of Hesse's individuation. They could be looked at as transference objects or marks made on her journey to self discovery, to the lost and wounded self, or concrete expressions of her search in finding her own identity as a person, as a woman, and as an artist. Then, in her final works, facing the approaching and untimely death, Eva Hesse gives expression 'to another kind of vision . . . from a total other reference point' (Lippard, 1976: 165).

Eva Hesse's brief career as an artist accelerated rapidly, and lasted only 10 years. She began to receive serious recognition within five years of having completed her art studies and of having arrived in New York. Sadly the period of triumph was brief, as three years later the first signs of a serious illness were there; Eva Hesse died 18 months later, in May 1970. Her extraordinary talent and influence were fully realized only posthumously, and her work continues to exert a powerful presence. Parker and Pollock describe Hesse's art as: 'a life-long process of exploration of art and self which took place not only in the objects she made but in her writings which subjected the notion of the artist and art to intensive investigation' (Parker and Pollock, 1981: 154).

## Personal history

Eva Hesse was born in Hamburg in January 1936 as the second daughter of Wilhelm and Ruth Hesse. In November 1938, when Eva was not yet 3 years old, she and her sister, Helen, were separated from their parents, and sent to a Catholic children's home in Holland to escape Nazi pogroms against the Jews. Fifteen months later the four members of the Hesse family were reunited and travelled, first to London, then to New York. Father Wilhelm had to accept work below his qualifications, and mother Ruth never recovered from the loss of her family and home in Germany. She sank into a severe, chronic depression with frequent hospitalizations. Eva was 9 years old when parents divorced and 10 when mother committed suicide. Having started her fine art studies at 18, she gained her BFA from the Yale School of Art and Architecture in 1959, and then returned to New York confident as an artist, a painter of the American Abstract Expressionist movement. On a personal level she was hopeful that through the redemptive power of art, she would overcome her crippling states of anxiety, and, by gaining more conscious understanding of her self, she would

master the effects of her traumatic history. On 12 December 1960 she wrote in her diary: 'I am in a bad way. Things have come to pass, so disturbing that the shell made of iron which has refused to be set ajar – will – must – at last open. . . . Problems of my past, of my past sickness, of the scars of my early beginnings' (Cooper, 1992: 26).

These fears and anxious feelings are depicted in several of her dark, disturbing images of 1960, many simply labelled 'untitled', as if, using these as mirrors of herself, she was questioning who she was. Was she the pretty little girl, her father's favourite daughter and the star pupil of Joseph Albers, or is the girl in one of her paintings 'Untitled' (1960) a truer self-image? This deeply expressive painting depicts a girl with her face cut off under the nose; there is no mouth, one yellow eye is closed, the other eye is open. Ground and figure are painted in the same murky, sombre colour. A dark brown band, looking like a dead body, is slumped over the girl's head, and separates the face from the background. The image is disturbing, the missing mouth might be expressing the loss of her own voice, and the two eyes, one open and the other closed, perhaps, revealing the divided self, the closed eye representing the imprisoned self behind the iron shell.

**Journey to the lost land**

Eva Hesse's dream had been from her teens to have a happy love relationship, and to have a family and children. In April 1961 she met Tom Doyle, a sculptor, who was 7 years older than her and apparently firmly fixed in his male role; they married later that same year. Eva wrote in her diary: 'I love Tom more every day. It is all so beautiful and complete. . . . A young girl in search of herself, in search of living, in search of becoming a person' (Cooper, 1992: 26).

Travelling to Europe had been another of Eva Hesse's dreams; this became a reality in 1964 when she and Tom Doyle, as artists, were invited to Germany. Accepting the invitation meant for Eva returning to the country that had killed millions of Jews, had forced her family to flee, and had robbed them of their homeland and security. The journey was for Eva a watershed, a return journey to the country of her birth, her roots, her childhood landscape, and to the sound of her lost language. It was a journey of re-visiting the wounding place, and of re-living her personal losses. It was also a journey of breaking the iron shell. Before Eva Hesse left New York she wrote in her diary:

> I sit here now, panicked and crying. The pressure of leaving lies heavy on me. . . . I cannot work because I have no peace of mind. It will be a weird search, like a secret mission . . . a new generation seeking a past. I know nothing of my family – my grandparents. Establishing losses encountered by the Hesses, never knowing their lives, them never knowing me or mine. (Cooper, 1992: 27)

During the first few months Eva Hesse suffered pains in her legs, she had recurring nightmares of death and terror, and she was unable to work. Very

gradually a new creative phase emerged; she began cutting up pieces of cord and pushing them through a screen. Perhaps the concrete breaking through a screen and the tying and knotting would bring together the painful – always present – memories of abandonments, separations and losses with an earlier pre-language experience of a containing environment and a nurturing mother. The work no longer exists, but it acted as an arbitrator between destructive and creative forces within her. Maria Kreutzer, in discussing Eva Hesse's breakthrough in Germany, speaks of 'the daring leap into dark' that is required by the artist to reconcile one's past, and of the fundamental role that an artist's need to retrieve and to repeat or to re-enact formative events and experiences has in making art (Kreutzer, 1992: 76).

Hesse's first German relief 'Ringaround Arosie' (1965) is a touchstone for many works that followed. The relief is rectangular in form; two flesh coloured circles, just touching each other, project abruptly from the crusty, grey ground. A brilliant orange-red circular line is drawn to contain the forms, and to separate them from the background. Each circle, wound in cord, has a protruding centre. The image of two 'rosy-nippled' circles can be read as two breasts, a little one on top of the big one, forming a kind of double female figure. The name 'Ringaround Arosie' refers to her closest friend Rosalyn Goldman, whose pregnancy was a cause of joy, but also aroused envy and sad feelings, as if Eva Hesse already knew that she would never be a mother.

Hesse saw the work as symbolizing birth or re-birth. The 'child and mother' are created as an inseparable, symbiotic unit; she, the creator of the image, is a detached viewer of her creation. The form reminds me of a face urn, seen as the symbol of the archetypal woman, the containing, nourishing and birth-giving female character. The archetypal Jewish Mother had been powerless in protecting her children against mass homicide. Could it be that Hesse created this image as a talisman for protection from the madness of Nazi Evil she was forced to face, being back on German soil?

As a psychotherapist, I have no difficulty in understanding the severity of the trauma of Eva Hesse's childhood experiences, being abruptly abandoned by her parents at a stage of her development when she had no sense of time, and being sent to a foreign country where strangers, speaking a foreign, incomprehensible language, surrounded her. My understanding is that the child had to use splitting processes in her self-management of the abandonment, mummifying the mother/child couple, and sealing it off from consciousness 'behind an iron shell'. The mother, who Eva was reunited with 15 months later, was not the one she had lost. Mother, remaining herself internally an abandoned, motherless child, could no longer be trusted, nor was she, as a severely depressed woman, available to her children. Her suicide was a final and total abandonment. Eva was frequently sick as a child. She used 'bad' behaviour as another way of getting attention:

> I used to feel a fraud all my life. The world thought I was a cute, smart kid and I kidded them. But at home I was called the terror. I was miserable. I had trouble – tremendous

> fear, incredible fear. I had my father tuck my blankets tight into my German bed which had bars at the bottom which I would hold at night, and he would tell me that we wouldn't be poor, and that we would not be robbed, and that he would take care of me in the morning. (Barrette, 1989: 9)

Judith S. Kestenberg (1993), in a paper 'What a psychoanalyst learned from the holocaust and genocide', writes of the need of survivors to live in two worlds at the same time, and how children use physical illness to depict what had happened on the emotional level. She stresses the importance of bringing back the pre-Holocaust story as a healing experience. Eva Hesse needed to return to the physical space of her childhood for her to re-experience the enormity of her personal losses, to separate herself from the past, and to make an attempt to unite the lost part within. She was surrounded by the landscape and language of her forgotten past. She saw the house she was born in, she met two of her mother's friends, and she heard stories about her family. What she had sealed off began to live inside her. The relief 'An Ear in a Pond' (1965) gives expression to the inner listening ear; the time had come to make connections with the deep waters of the maternal pond and to make a listening connection to the mother that once was. She named another relief 'Oomamaboomba' (1965), the name sounding like baby babbling and reaching out for mama.

In her isolation and loneliness in Germany, Hesse also had time to think of her position as a woman. She understood for the first time that a girl has been made to feel like an object, but she also clarified her own position: 'Mine is not so much acceptance of object role as it was insecurities from a broken, sick, unsupportive home' (Lippard, 1976: 26).

### Return to America

Hesse, with her drive and ambition undiminished, re-emerged from her European journey as an independent artist, a sculptor. She claimed full responsibility for her own art and life, and saw herself as a subject, a woman and an adult; her marriage had not survived her transformation and on their return to New York the couple separated. The journey to Europe, lasting 15 months, could be compared to a hero's voyage, as described in the ancient epic of Gilgamesh where the central figure had defied the goddess Ishtar and made his hazardous journey into the land of death. Eva Hesse had re-visited her childhood world, and had survived re-connecting with her painful past. It had been possible in Germany, in a country suffering under massive national guilt, to share the collective pain of those who had inflicted wounds with her personal pain of being one of the wounded. Hesse had met Joseph Beuys, the German artist who expressed this collective need for redemption in his art, and a decade later Anselm Kiefer who, through his work 'Scorched Earth', attempts to come to terms with his country's past.

Having been away from the competitive and incestuous American art scene, Hesse was unaware of the fundamental changes that had taken place. Abstract Expressionism had faded away, and now the movement was Minimalism, with its simple arrangements of identical units, its working out of geometrical permutations, grids and repetitions. In one of Hesse's first new works, 'Ishtar' (1965), her interest in 'serial' and 'simple' concepts of minimalism was already in evidence, and her approach was now subjected to a formal rigour. This very personal work depicts two vertical rows of repeating circular forms, with cords protruding from their centres. She uses the German reliefs as background sources, such as the winding of cord into circular 'breast' forms as in 'Ringaround Arosie', and cords protruding from the centre, as in 'Ear in a Pond'. The repetition of the breast form recalls a powerful female presence. Perhaps re-entry to the American art scene had felt threatening, and Hesse was re-creating the Good Mother of fertility, with her endless supply of milk from her many breasts, as her protector. The magic circles are acting as defences against the Terrible Mother who could pull her back to the land of the dead. The dangling, protruding cords represent the threat and the paradox – if pulled, the circular forms can be undone. The Great Goddess, Ishtar, carries this paradox. She is primarily the Goddess of fertility but she also rules the underworld:

> When she is angry, the Goddess Ishtar can close the womb of the Living creatures, and all life stands still. As Good Mother, she is the mistress of the East Gate, the gate of birth; as Terrible Mother, she is the mistress of the West Gate, the gate of death, the engulfing entrance to the underworld. (Neumann, 1963: 170)

The perfect breast, the circular form, is repeated in Hesse's drawings and wound cord pieces until the end of 1967; some of the circles are sliced through and sections removed, and these might, on a personal level, give expression to the early separation from the breast and the wound to the self.

Seeing the American art scene from a new, more detached, perspective made Eva Hesse acutely aware how dominated it was by male power and attitudes. She realized that even her best artist colleagues did not take her or her art seriously. Ready to confront their patronizing attitudes, she created mocking, humorous and disturbing works such as 'Ingeminate' (1965) and 'Several' (1965), both works showing, with confidence, her vicious, murderous feelings towards the 'bad object', the cruel penis. 'Ingeminate' is depicting two black mummified phalluses joined to each other with 3 metre long surgical tubing; they are in her control, she can hang them on the wall, put them on the floor or lift them up. In 'Several', she has joined seven long, thin, black, phallic forms, hanging limp and impotent on the wall, looking like sausages in a German butcher's shop. Perhaps these pieces give expression to the hated 'bad object' within; for her, the archetypal Male Evil was personified in Hitler, while on a personal level her revengeful feelings were directed towards her husband, now living with another woman. The year 1965 ends with Hesse taking stock:

> Where do I go from here: 1. By means of work and also through fruits of acceptance and approval. 2. Friendship and social life. 3. Unveiling past – thus overcoming shit – purging it from entering future life – altogether, forever. (Cooper, 1992: 36)

In January 1966 Hesse finished her new work 'Hang up'. The work was seen as a quantum leap from her earlier sculptures; Hesse linked it to the works she had started in Europe: 'that came out of nothing, and it is very surreal, and yet very formal'; 'All I wanted was to find my own scheme. My world. Inner peace or turmoil, but I wanted it to be mine' (Lippard, 1976: 84).

Visually, the piece was shocking. It was the first time that viewers were confronted with simply a bandaged picture frame, from which a steel tube loops into the spectators' space. Was framing an empty space a painting or a swansong to painting? Was she both joining the 1960s artists, who were proclaiming that painting was finished, and not joining? In discussing the piece, Hesse describes 'Hang up' as:

> the most important early statement I made. . . . It is huge, six feet by seven. It is a frame, ostensibly, and it sits on the wall and it is a very simple structure. The frame is all tied up like a hospital bandage – like if someone broke an arm. . . . The whole thing is absolutely rigid, neat; cord around the entire thing. . . . It is also extreme. It is absurd (that rod) out of the structure. (Nemser, 1970: 59–63)

On a personal level the timing of 'Hang up' can be linked to Hesse accepting that she was alone. Angry feelings had been worked through, she was in the empty space of loss, left with a bandaged frame, but from that frame there is a strong loop coming out into a new uncharted space, hers. Later that same year Eva Hesse received the devastating news that her father had died of a heart attack in Switzerland. She wrote in her diary at the end of the year: 'A most strange year. Lonely, strange but a lot of growth and inward search. A final abandonment. And Daddy's death. And now on to work, and other changes, changes for another start' (Lippard, 1976: 84).

### Joining with and separating from the minimalists

Early the following year, 1967, Eva Hesse moved from her large studio to work in two small rooms in her living quarters. It is as if she needed to withdraw from the world into a more containing space where she could work through her 'final abandonment'. She made a set of small boxes of wood. She covered them with painted papier-mâché and filled them with small items, some carefully wrapped in plastic. I would like to suggest that she wanted to wrap up and seal the wounded parts of herself into these boxes, and clearly separate what is inside and private from what can be shown to the outside world. Outwardly, by having her long, beautiful, dark hair cut off, she changed her image from a young girl to a woman, but by sealing a lock into one of the boxes, she perhaps also ensured that the little girl would be in her safe keeping.

As an independent artist, Hesse was now ready to join the minimalist group of Sol LeWitt, Robert Smithson, Donald Judd and Carl Andre. She differed from her peers by her deeply personalized feelings towards materials, and by seeking to give expression to such polarities as form and meaning:

> I feel strongly that the only art is the art of the artist personally, and found out as much as possible for himself by himself. I do not mind being miles from anybody else. I think the best artists are those who have stood alone, and who can be separated from what movement that has been around them. (Lippard, 1976: 196)

In her new works, 'Accession' I, II and III (1967), the intimate, small and secret boxes have been transformed into large boxes, standing on the floor, and open for the viewer to look into them. The walls, by being perforated with round holes, and with tubing poked through each hole into the inside, have become the field of activity. The outside of the boxes looks woven and peaceful, while the interior, in contrast, is bristling, prickly, and much more uncomfortable. Hesse described the tensions of the two opposing forces as Mother Force and Father Force:

> Conflicting Forces Inside Eva, Mother Force: unstable, creative, asexual,
> Threatening my stability, sadistic, aggressive.
> Father Force: good little girl, obedient, neat, clean, organised, masochistic. (Parker and Pollock, 1981: 154)

The box 'Accession III' differs from the others. Tension between the outside and the inside has gone; opposites are united. The use of Fibreglass and resin as her material makes 'Accession III' translucent, radiating light from the inside and creating a magic circle, a mandala, around the box. Hesse was not satisfied with the magic beauty of this work, she did not want false, idealistic solutions; for her art should express 'wrongness', and give form to the vulnerabilities and absurdities of life.

### Journey towards light and death

Minimalism had given Hesse's work an impersonal and formal quality. The expressionist side in her had been waiting, possibly waiting to find materials that would combine the formalist vocabulary and give her freedom to express feelings spontaneously. She searched for flexible, translucent and, often, perishable materials. She wanted the pieces to deteriorate, deliberately ignoring advice to avoid materials prone to decaying. 'Life doesn't last, art doesn't last, it doesn't matter' (Lippard, 1976: 210). She abandoned magic circles that were obstructing free use of line, she removed protecting walls or transformed them into transparent windows; her forms became ugly and organic, alluding to the vulnerable, unprotected body, as if they were foreboding the changes taking place in her own body. There is something 'absurd' (Hesse's word) and grimly

humorous about these experimental latex pieces, some with their abstract reference to a body dismembered, some looking like organs with surgical tubes coming out from them, and all evoking a sensation of a body abused and in pain.

Hesse became obsessed with the image of a hose coming out from a bucket and she made numerous drawings and test pieces, but in her final version of the image 'Repetition nineteen' (1968), the hoses had been removed. Nineteen hollow cylindrical units, made of Fibreglass, battered and squeezed into a different configuration, stand as a group on the floor. They convey to the viewer, with their twisted, sagging and swaying shapes, a confused imagery of the female body. Her new works were shown in Hesse's first one-woman exhibition later that year. They were seen as 'pathetic objects', disturbing in their sexuality and vulnerability, but also as stunningly beautiful. Hesse's statement in the exhibition catalogue read:

> I would like the work to be non-work. This means that it would find its way beyond my preconceptions. What I want of my art I can eventually find. The work must go on beyond this. It is my main concern to go beyond what I know and what I can know. The formal principles are understandable and understood. It is the unknown quantity from which and where I want to go. As a thing, an object, it accedes to its non-logical self. It is something, it is nothing. (Lippard, 1976: 131)

Outwardly, everything in Hesse's life was going well, but her body was beginning to give alarming messages that all was not well. She felt tired and depressed, had headaches, and was vomiting. She had become used to interpreting her physical symptoms as caused by her chronic anxiety state, and could not think that she might be suffering from a serious physical illness. She had for years felt she was fated to be sick and incapable, to die of suicide, as her mother. She recalled:

> Christmas 1968 I was so ill. Had signs but would not recognize them. One can deny everything. . . . You throw up – first you ate something, then something is wrong, you did not eat something. You do not throw up – till you throw up eating nothing. Keep going to the collapse. (Lippard, 1976: 138)

Indeed on 6 April 1969 Hesse collapsed and was rushed to hospital; her symptoms were diagnosed as a brain tumour. The operation that followed could not remove the whole tumour. Thirty years had gone since the mad 'brain tumour' of Hitler's mind had totally destroyed the safe and secure world of the child, Eva. Now brain cells in her own body had gone crazy, threatening her survival.

Death was closing in, death, the invisible companion, that had shadowed Eva Hesse on life's journey, and had forced her to build safety structures as magic protectors. Each 'psychic model' had within it its shadow side: 'Ringaround Arosie' acknowledges the reality of mass death through the black

plague, 'we all fall down'; 'Ishtar' can turn to the Terrible Mother, the mistress of the gate of death; the sealed boxes can become autistic prisons, or the boxes with holes in the walls tie you to the battlefield of the opposing Mother Force and Father Force.

Paradoxically, in the face of death, Eva Hesse was finally freed from her anxieties and fears, freed to use her own vision. She moved into a final stage of growth, living her last year with incredible intensity and with an acceleration of creative energy, seeking in the final works to give expression to 'another kind of vision . . . from a total other reference point . . . that vision will come through total risk, freedom, discipline' (Lippard, 1976: 165). Hesse completed six major works – all fragile and perishable, and many suspended from the ceiling, as if floating in space, already liberated from mass. After her operation the first piece she returned to was 'Right After' (1969), a mass of Fibreglass-coated string suspended from fixed points into an orderly and free rhythmic movement. The beauty and calmness of this work did not feel right for Hesse, although it is not difficult to think that after the operation she had hoped for the miracle that all is right, and needed to deny the reality of approaching death.

'Untitled', completed in March 1970, only two months before her death on 29 May, was one of Hesse's final works and an 'ugly' successor to 'Right After'. The piece, made of rope, string and wire, expresses with force and honesty the messy mixture of knotted feelings, locked to a body that is falling apart, and the brain that is out of control; feelings of being captive in a tangled net. In that tangled chaos there is, each time it is hung, also new order:

> This piece is very ordered. Maybe I'll make it more structured, maybe I'll leave it changeable. When it is completed its order could be chaos. Chaos can be structured as non-chaos. That we know from Jackson Pollock. (Nemser, 1970: 59–63)

## Conclusion

In this paper I have explored an aspect of Eva Hesse's art by making connections between some of her 'psychic models' and her life story. I am acknowledging that it is never possible to know what an artist transfers into her work, and that I, as the viewer of her works and reader of her notes, have created a text coloured by my countertransference feelings and my thoughts as a psychotherapist.

Eva Hesse called her life absurd. The absurdity was the enormity of emotional pain she had to carry as an innocent victim of genocide. Hesse used the creative process to give concrete expression to her feelings, her fundamental insecurities, as well as to the defence systems of an unprotected self; her 'psychic models' became a way of separating herself from the devastations of her past. Her helpless rage is expressed through humour, exaggerated and grotesque forms, and her vulnerability and fragility through perishable materials (many of

her works have already disintegrated). The dark shadow of death and destruction hangs over her. In the final phase of her life, accepting that she would die, her creative spirit was freed to express her own kind of vision 'from a total other reference point' with strength and clarity.

By dying Eva Hesse remains forever young. Her body is safe in the lap of the Mother she longed for. Her life story and her works, protected from envy and rivalry, live on as a text that can be read again and again.

## Notes

Illustrations to works by Eva Hesse discussed in this paper are all in Cooper (1992).

1. This quote is taken from an interview with Cindy Nemser, taped early in 1970, and cited in Lippard (1976: 5).

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# Books reviewed

**Israel Psychoanalytic Journal 1(1), 2003: pp. 162**

When asked to write this piece, I wondered how to review a journal on the basis of its first issue? It surely takes a while to develop a profile. But I was also intrigued that a psychoanalytic journal should define itself by its nationality, and hoped to discover what might be distinctive about it. This inaugural number of the *Israel Psychoanalytic Journal* addresses an international audience and is intending to make its mark as a site of theoretical debate at an expert level, one not confined only to the arena of Israeli psychoanalysis. This issue is filled with papers by significant international figures – Andre Green, Judith Mitrani, Robert Stolorow, William Meissner, Joyce McDougall.

Their contributions are diverse. Two are about the effects of trauma on the individual. The first of these is by Judith Mitrani, who describes how she came to understand a particularly problematic countertransference response that she had to one of her patients, in the light of that patient's unconscious inheritance of her parents' unmentalized experience of the Holocaust. The other, by Joyce McDougall, is a lively narrative account of therapy with a young man who had been the victim of an avalanche disaster.

The editors are particularly pleased to be able to include Andre Green's paper 'The double limit', never previously published in English. Although I found it somewhat problematic, encountering Green's complicated theoretical ideas through the medium of translation, I could see that, like the Mitrani paper that followed it, Green was dealing with the important question of how thoughts come into being. His paper is more technical than Mitrani's, and his ideas are similar to Bion's.

The editors' inclusion of the remaining two contributors, Stolorow and Meissner, suggest their willingness to open up controversy, in this case about the intersubjectivist school of analysis. Stolorow's paper proposes that, from the intersubjective stance, it is the analyst's attunement to his patient in making accurate interpretations, rather than the content of the interpretations themselves, that is the transformative element in what he does. From this viewpoint, self-disclosure can sometimes be helpful in establishing the analyst as an understanding presence, as long as it is being done in the patient's interests, rather than to relieve some unworked-through aspect of the analyst's

countertransference. Meissner's thoughtful paper that follows sets out a critique of the intersubjectivist position. He suggests that the current use of the term 'intersubjective' can become imprecise. He prefers to stress the importance of mutual empathy between patient and analyst as an essential quality of the therapeutic alliance. It is this alliance rather than the transference, in Meissner's view, that is collaboratively created by the therapeutic couple, and he calls it interpersonal rather than intersubjective.

These papers, although interesting in themselves, might appear in any psychoanalytic journal. But in their opening contributions, the editor in chief, Professor Moshe Halevi Spero, and the executive editor, Michael Shoshani, outline their aspirations and objectives for the journal, which make it clear that it is of great importance to them that it reflects the particular Israeli context. Michael Shoshani begins his paper, entitled 'Love of psychoanalysis: A personal note':

> Colleagues and friends have repeatedly asked me: 'Why establish an English-language Israeli psychoanalytic journal?' And especially, some add, 'Why now, at a time when Israel is involved in what is probably the most difficult period of conflict over its existence since the founding of the State?'

These are very interesting questions, and I look forward to finding out how they would be answered. There are some pointers in this first issue. Moshe Halevi Spero explains how the national context informed the journal's design. Psychoanalysis is intimately bound up with the history of the Jewish people, and the cover of the journal is intended to remind us how far back the history of Jewish civilization actually goes, and of the significant part that Hebrew has played in the evolution of written text. It bears an image of a second-century BC coin from the reign of a Maccabean king with its Hebrew inscription and behind it, that of a stone calendar, the oldest example of written Hebrew in existence. The theme of writing and inscription is taken up by Halevi Spero, whose opening paper, after initial editorial comment, is entitled 'Writing in the land of the book'. Here he gives us a glimpse of what might become a distinctive style of this particular journal, in which an Israeli author presents his studies of psychoanalysis, in a context that is alive to cultural traditions. He opens with an intriguing reflection on the enormous responsibility not only of beginning the inaugural paper, but also of taking on the particular difficulties inherent in writing about psychoanalytic practice. He is thinking here about the tension involved in the attempt to write about states of mind that are beyond language. But to illustrate this he uses a specifically Jewish reference. He quotes a story from midrashic literature 'that depicts the letters of the Hebrew alphabet vying, anthropomorphically, each arguing its own merits to be the sign with which God would begin to inscribe the Torah – the Text, according to tradition, which predated the Creation and served as its architectonic'. The legend states that the letter *bet* was chosen

> in order that this square shaped letter, the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, closed on three sides and open only to the left (i.e. facing the text), would mark a boundary against chaos, the readable side of the logically prior *aleph*, the latter being an unknowable co-participant in the pre-*bet* state of absolute and incomprehensible symmetry.

He goes on to say that he is speaking not only of the struggle that all psychoanalytic therapists have when they attempt to write about their clinical experience, he is also addressing a particular difficulty that he discerns among the Israeli psychoanalytic community in achieving a state of professional identity, that is confident enough to sustain its own journal.

Linda Grant, in the review section of the *Guardian* on 31 January 2004, quotes the Israeli novelist David Grossman's description of the difficulties that face Israeli authors when they attempt to draw creatively on their current situation. Grossman says that Israelis feel the burden of the way others see them. 'We are regarded as a metaphor', Grant quotes him as saying, 'since we started as a nation we were a big story, we are the Bible, and if you are already a story you are not real. Israelis are addicted to this condition, and it makes it difficult for us to be normal, to adapt to the pettiness of routine.' I felt that this was perhaps something implied by Halevi Spero's choice of title, 'Writing in the land of the book', at a time when we are all so much more aware that our societies can become crucially divided by the contents of these books.

Halevi Spero and Shoshani are men with strong spiritual convictions who both make clear their feelings about their Jewish and Israeli identity, but do not shy away from mentioning the current position of Israel in relation to the Arab world. Drawing attention to the fact that, at the end of each paper, the international summaries are translated into Hebrew and Arabic, as well as the usual choice of languages, Shoshani says, movingly:

> One can detect in contemporary Israeli society an historical tendency emanating from a long heritage of suffering and persecution towards a defensive stance of splendid isolation and self-sufficiency – perhaps expressed by the biblical, 'Behold, it is a people that shall dwell alone' (Numbers, xxiii: 9). Perhaps to actively encourage an opposing stance, I hope that this *Journal* will contribute in its own unique way to all of the current and ongoing two-way bridges that have been constructed between Israel and the international psychoanalytic community, opening a path for ongoing dialogue. . . . Israel, as well as the whole region of the Middle East, continues to suffer wars and terror, and has been traumatised for more than fifty years. Peoples, as well as individuals, have suffered and sustained losses of incomprehensible proportion . . . We would like to appeal to the Israeli Jewish and Arab professional community as well as Palestinian and Arab professionals from Arab countries in the Middle East and world-wide to take an active part in the dialogue that the *Journal* hopes to offer.

Although the inaugural number of the *Israel Psychoanalytic Journal* is taking its first step on to the international stage, Shoshani's words constitute a very clear statement of intent, which, if it can be fulfilled, will make this journal a

publication to watch. Perhaps it could provide a site for debate and discussion in which psychoanalytic discourse could be used to reflect on the effects of trauma and of long-term exposure to entrenched mental positions, with the hope of introducing creative exchange between people who at present are estranged from one another. That would truly be a way in which psychoanalytic thinking could make a vitally important contribution.

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JULIET NEWBIGIN

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