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Creativity: A Work in Progress

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ABSTRACT

Through the integration of autobiographical, theoretical, and clinical material, the author attempts to describe a developmental path leading to a "creative" solution to object loss. The implications of this model are considered both for the particular type of individual described and for general psychoanalytic theory and technique.

Beginning with Freud's (1910) study of Leonardo, psychoanalytic approaches to the creative artist have attempted to describe the artistic rendering in terms of everyday human conflict expressed in a form which is pleasing rather than repugnant and which enables the artist to obtain fantasy mastery over those conflicts. Attributing an "unanalysable artistic gift" (1928p. 179) to the artist, Freud never addressed the problem of form. Later, in biographies of ever-increasing complexity and analytic sophistication, issues such as merger fantasies and twinship (e.g., in Meyer's 1967 **biography of Joseph Conrad**) were defined as elements that distinguished the artist's biography from that of others, but these authors continued to investigate the artistic production from within the framework of the artist's personal life experience.

Issues that have been the focus of study include special sensitivities and the fluidity of developmental stages (Greenacre, 1957),

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(1971), regression in the service of the ego (Kris, 1952), the capacity to desynthesize and hallucinate without ego regression (Weissman, 1967), early loss and/or bodily disturbances resulting in fantasies of reparation (Niederland, 1967), (1976), fusion fantasies superimposed on an ego core (Rose, 1980), (1987), vicissitudes of perception (Ehrenzweig, 1952) and thinking processes (Noy, 1972), (1978); (Rothenberg, 1971), and self-esteem regulation (Gedo, 1983); (Kohut, 1966). Many authors refer to issues such as idealization, bisexuality, and affective lability, but controversy still exists as to whether psychopathology is essential to true creativity. This is related to the question of whether the phenomenon utilizes neutralized energy and sublimation (Freud, 1908) or remains closer to the raw instinctual drives (Greenacre, 1957), or whether it represents a solution to conflict different in essence from that of neurosis (Kubie, 1958). In general, the artist is felt to have "unique narcissistic vicissitudes ... and ... special disturbances in the sense of identity and reality" (Coltrera, 1981p. 32), which the classical analyst might approach only with great trepidation.

With Winnicott's (1953) description of the transitional object, the definition of "creativity" was expanded to include the bringing into existence of any new idea or new synthesis. He considered creativity to be a natural capacity of early life, which can be utilized or lost as development progresses. This definition blurs the distinction between the artist and the person with a rich inner world of fantasy, a distinction which is all too apparent in our analytic approaches to these two types of individuals.

Few analyses of artists have been reported (Niederland [1967] and Oremland [1975] being notable exceptions). Among these, several analysts comment on but none adequately distinguish between levels of talent or the relationship between talent and creativity. This indicates that there is also not a clear differentiation between the person who produces aesthetically appealing works and the person with the motivation for and ability to work at the "cutting edge" of a particular field that allows for the transforming aspects of artistic/scientific production.

All of this suggests that our field has both a fascination with and an avoidance of the artist, along with a wish to master the subject by integrating it into our existing theories or taking up theories that serve to blur the distinctions between "us" and "them," while discarding as ego strengths/defects those aspects that do not easily fit. This stance limits both the kinds of persons who can be deemed analyzable and the originality that can be tolerated within the field itself.

In this paper I will describe what I perceive to be a particular path taken by children destined to create new syntheses in their chosen fields. These children, with "special sensitivities" and strong integrative capacities, react to object loss with intense creative efforts, reflecting a defensive maneuver which becomes so exciting, rewarding, and defensively successful that it is elaborated on throughout life, and affects development in profound ways, particularly in the areas of object relations, modes of communication, and phallic-oedipal phase resolution. By elaborating on these ideas with clinical and autobiographical material, I hope to demonstrate how the understanding that I arrived at in relation to myself and my patient formed the foundation for the theoretical model.

Mr. A, a gifted actor/director/playwright, came to analysis because his very promising career had essentially self-destructed as the result of a series of bad choices. He was now working at a job that he professed to hate, but he had no idea how to re-enter the field that he loved and at which he excelled. The birth of a sibling when Mr. A was one year of age, a series of moves, and the death of a close relative during Mr. A's childhood seemed significant early traumata which served to intensify his attachment to his immediate family. Then, just as he was entering adolescence, a younger sibling died suddenly. It was at that point that Mr. A and his older brother discovered the performing arts and creative writing. His brother was his "twin," who was able to make Mr. A's work "come alive" by adding a further dimension. Both of them became working actors, and together

they wrote a play that was produced in a midwestern town and was so successful that they received offers to produce it in New York. Not long after they arrived, this brother was killed by a stray bullet on his way home from his night job. Mr. A responded by becoming passionately involved with his career and with the women who were beginning to recognize and pursue him. His need for someone to sleep with every night was of violent intensity, and he was very aware that he had no feeling for the women at all, except to satisfy his craving for sex and affirmation. In this state he became even more successful, directed his own play, and got a few significant and well-received roles. At this point he sabotaged himself in a variety of ways—choosing wrong agents, wrong roles, responding in inappropriate ways to others' expectations, and in particular refusing to "go after" possibilities that were not immediately handed to him. After a few years, while he continued to write and take classes, he found that almost no one recognized his name, and even those few were unwilling to open their doors to him.

In the first few months of the analysis he struggled with the beginnings of intense sexual feelings for me, stimulated by the longing for another "twin" relationship as he started to get pleasure and hope from the exploration of his unconscious mind. Then I left for my summer vacation, and his anxiety and rage were directed toward a stranger with whom he provoked a midnight street fight. I interpreted his feelings as being displaced from me, as someone who would stimulate and then abandon him, perhaps like his siblings, never to return. He seemed to understand the connection and was quite intrigued, but anger at me did not emerge.

After the vacation the situation in the analysis changed. He remained cooperative, struggled to find and express his feelings, and appeared to understand the symbolism of the unconscious and the importance of connecting past and present. But the excitement and beginning sexual feelings faded, and he no longer seemed able to intuit the concept that the feelings with which he was struggling could also be seen in the relationship

with me. He never associated to me, except to ask periodically, "What do you think, Doc?," and he did not seem to comprehend that his need to ask the question might have meaning other than simply wanting to know if he was on the right track. I offered the hypothesis that he was looking for me to "complete" him as his brother had, and he thought that that might be possible, but it obviously did not reach him.

Another confusing issue was that opposite feelings seemed to coexist in this man. For example, he could easily consider the possibility that he had homosexual longings while remaining homophobic, and it did not strike me as an obsessional isolation of affect and idea. There seemed to be a fluidity in his defensive structure that made it difficult to pursue a theme beyond a certain point. We examined his guilt in a variety of contexts, and he found the exploration interesting and useful, but I continued to feel that while we were doing something, we were not going anywhere—exactly the problem he was facing in his life.

At this time I was struggling with a related personal issue. That I have a creative way of thinking was a conviction I had reached during the course of my own analysis while examining my solution to childhood dilemmas. But the mechanism through which I had arrived at these solutions had not been explored to my satisfaction.

I had become aware of this dissatisfaction when I went into labor four months prematurely and missed the last two weeks of the analysis. I finally completed them three months later, immediately before the baby was to be released from the hospital. I associated to the experience as if it had been a dream I had had the previous night, one very similar to a series of dreams with which I had begun my analysis. The act itself seemed somehow to parallel my mother's miscarriage two weeks before I was sent off to school at age five, but the affect in relation to termination was contained and discharged in the piece of "performance art." By that, I mean it seemed to be much more than simply "acting out" by replacing my analyst with a child: it was so well orchestrated, and there was detailed psychic content and intensity to

the experience that made it seem like the story of my life. The act brought to consciousness my unresolved questions about my creativity by forcing me to look at not only the "why" but the "HOW" of my behavior. It seemed "creative" both concretely, in the birth of a child, and in the mechanism of an enactment which involved the participation of my body, my analyst, my husband, and my obstetrician. And it clearly contained the confrontation to my analyst: "So you like creativity, huh? I'll show you creativity ..."

It was a strange ending, and I was left with many questions just as I was attempting to complete my analytic training. Soon after I was told to prepare for graduation, the following event took place. I gave a new supervisor a six-month summary which I had written in my usual style, using few theoretical formulations, but rather descriptions that posed more questions than answers. He responded differently from other supervisors by going through it line by line, suggesting that I be more specific in saying exactly what I meant and asking how I might have reached a more specific formulation. I became quite upset, with the feeling that what he was suggesting was impossible and that he was challenging the essence of who I was. Here was what I both wanted and feared—the analyst who challenged my "art."

I changed supervisors, and began to share aspects of the problem with each of my four remaining supervisors—first tentatively, then much more actively, seductively, and aggressively. I got very different kinds of responses from these very different people—interpretations, suggestions, questioning, avoidance—and I shared slightly different aspects of the problem with each. As each person would offer a response, I became aware that I was using analytically the ideas that felt right, and discarding the rest. I also became aware of the intensity of libido and aggression in my demanding a response from them; much of the self-analysis concerned the shame and guilt involved in the various psychosexual maneuvers through which I accomplished or did not accomplish this. Eventually, I realized that I was indeed searching for my analyst.

At this point one might anticipate that a response would be to stop the behavior and mourn the lost analyst, or if conflicts persisted, to seek out another. But what I experienced was different. It was a feeling not of "Where is he?" but of "THERE he is!" At that moment I felt that I had found the answer for which I had been desperately searching—an understanding of how I thought, a flood of connections to my past, a conviction that I had the capacity for self-analysis, and a sense of what the creative process was. The realization that I had been searching for my analyst coincided with the moment of refinding him—in fact, a better "him." I had ripped my supervisors apart, using any libidinal mechanism I was invited to use, until I had put enough pieces together to resurrect him from the ashes. The associations were to my mother's month-long hospitalization during my first year of life, when I was left in the care of her mother and three sisters, as well as to other losses later in my childhood. For the first time I felt that I could comprehend what an infant might need to do in order to hold on to a memory of her mother for that interminable length of time, and how a positive sense of "self" might actually be a tentative outcome when she actually returned.

Phyllis Greenacre, in "The Childhood of the Artist" (1957) and in other remarkable works on the nature of artistic creativity, spoke of the potential artist as possessing unusual sensitivities to sensory stimulation, along with both a need and an ability to integrate the stimuli, using an "ease and wealth of symbolization" (p. 54). She noted a greater capacity for empathy both for others and for the individual's own body state, as well as an anthropomorphizing capacity that continues into adulthood. She described the gifted child's use of "collective alternates," which is related to an intense family romance fantasy and a "love affair with the world" (p. 57) that requires the offer of a love child in the form of artistic production. There is often a need to overcome a masturbation compulsion "heavily charged with anal problems" (p. 56), overlapping and less fully resolved libidinal

phases, complex issues relating to identification and sublimation, and the phenomenon which she described as "penis awe." My personal experience enabled me to visualize a model of an early defensive maneuver possible in these children, which would explain the phenomena outlined by Greenacre.

Suppose the mother of a typical child leaves or delays gratification for a period of time. Freud (1900p. 566) said that hallucinatory wish fulfillment is gradually replaced by ego development which allows for delay of immediate satisfaction in order to find a realistic way of obtaining gratification. Transitional phenomena of the kind described by Winnicott represent an almost universal attempt to recreate and hold on to the lost object, thus allowing for individuality and reality testing to develop while self-esteem is preserved. The object represents mother, but it is equally important that it not BE mother.

But if the loved person does not physically or emotionally return, the "transitional" aspect cannot be preserved. In such a case the object can take on a fetishistic quality and become increasingly used for self-stimulation, while in life the child may regress by becoming withdrawn and depressed, losing interest in outside activities and other people. This child can be enraged and can fantasize ripping mother apart and destroying her, but the fantasy is frightening. The conflict is intense, and other solutions must be found—often in the sadomasochistic realm. In extreme cases the use of fantasy might be relinquished altogether, with tension discharge replacing thought.

For the child who experiences "deeper resonances and more overtones" (Greenacre, 1963p. 15), "mother" would be a much more complex and layered formation of visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and emotional experiences which form a whole but at the same time are constantly shifting, both within mother and between mother and the outside world.

... this might mean ... an intensification of the experience ... to include not only the primary object which is focused on but

more peripheral objects which are related in some degree or fashion to the primary one in their ability to arouse somewhat similar sensory responses (**Greenacre, 1957p. 57**).

Full reality-based integration and individuation may take longer for such a child than it would for the average child, and if the stimuli are beyond the child's capacity to integrate, massive, global defenses can be erected and the synthetic function severely compromised. But if the child can develop his/her complex emotional state in relation to the complex emotional state of parents and other caregivers, a solid and stable core of identity, with flexibility, can result. (The literature does not adequately differentiate between children with emotional sensitivities and those with sensitivities only in other realms. I do not believe that the two invariably coexist, but for the purposes of developing a psychoanalytic model out of a huge diversity of character types, I will emphasize those children with a greater capacity for empathy as well as an outlet in another perceptual sphere, and extrapolate to the others.)

If this child's mother leaves, he/she might search for her and find pieces of her in other caretakers—the same eyes, smile, vocal inflections, touch, perfume, and emotional states as well—that resonate with the experience of being with mother. This is put together into a picture of mother that is not a "hallucination" or protosymbolic/symbolic substitute, but a different type of memory construct formed from the active exploration and integration of real people—a transitional state between reality and illusion. Later, symbols representing pieces of mother can be used as well. At this point, in ways not noticeably different from those of the "average" child, this child will be able to tolerate the separation longer and be better able to utilize the things that other caretakers might offer, since there is less need to withdraw, and the anger is discharged in the active attempts to take apart and master the stimulation from the "collective alternates." But the re-creation is as close to action as it is to thought, and it involves the use of others to gratify a fantasy/wish

at the same time that it does not necessitate distortion of who the others are as individuals.

For most children, holding on to the image of mother in memory works only for a short period of time, because she is not there in reality and the satisfaction that she offers is denied until her actual return. A blanket, or a fantasy, cannot be a mother. But the child who puts together a memory of mother from other people has both the memory and the "mother." Both internal and actual relationships with mother and with caregivers are preserved, while the libidinal wish to merge and the aggressive wish to rip mother apart are gratified, and self-esteem and reality testing are spared as well. So, "I don't need you, I have my own picture of you" is a defense that "works" both internally and in the child's external world. This capacity can be utilized positively, but if there is severe loss or trauma, the relationship with real people will be delibidinized. In this case the need to create takes on a violent intensity, since without that picture, all is lost.

For this person the excitement is in the absence, not the presence of the other, and the stable mother, the one who can be loved, is the one only vaguely remembered but continually recreated in the child's own mind. The outlines of this imagined "good mother" may change as other objects are taken in and integrated into her outline. The real mother is no longer necessary at this level and may in fact become a symbol of herself—a concrete representation that stands for the "more alive" but at the same time nonexistent, created mother. Such a child can have his/her mother and eat her too.

Since the mechanism I am postulating has its origins very early in life, it is likely to have a profound effect on language development and communication. In Winnicott's (1960) model, language develops within a created shared space between mother and child, which allows the child to master separation through the use of symbols. It involves a new way of communicating at the same time that it necessitates a mourning process as individuality develops. Words, like feces, become a created

and then shared gift to mother, which compensates for the loss and separateness, and allows for identification. But the child that I am postulating cannot use words in this way, because there is already a defense against acknowledging mother as primary love object. So mother's offer of organization through her words may be rejected by the child, because it comes from her and represents her and also because the organizations themselves do not do sufficient justice to such a child's inner experience. Words then become used in much the same way that mother is used—not to define existing ideas specifically, but to paint a picture of something that becomes "more real" by virtue of being unspecifiable. Words may later be used in a variety of different ways (as a mechanism for defining and using the other person, or to create a love gift of verbally expressed ideas taken to a higher level of abstraction) rather than being used for direct reciprocal communication.

And in an analogous way, the ability to use clay or paint, rather than offering an outlet for mastery of loss of feces as further development in the direction of separateness and individuality, in these children enables them to continue to bypass the mourning process, perpetuating the fantasy of having a better mother. The compulsion to create is intense, and the product IS the loved object; it is not a sublimation.

This early defensive maneuver, if reinforced, has major implications for the phallic phase. If the absence of the object is what stimulates excitement and the object itself is merely a symbol of itself, then there is likely to be a comparable resolution to the problem of the difference between the sexes. In addition to Greenacre's (1957p. 61) observations about the relationship between tumescence and inspiration, I believe that the phenomenon of penis awe has its origins here as well. The observation of the difference between the sexes would have a profound impact on such a sensitive child who needs so desperately to see him/herself as complete. But the threat or actuality of the absence of a penis becomes, in a way, analogous to the threat of loss of mother—not something horrifying but rather an intense

stimulus to the imagination. The excitement, combined with the cathexis of the fantasy itself and the aloneness, leads to compulsive masturbation. The child will also have less need to resolve the question quickly and definitively, since the excitement lies in the act of finding a solution with a fantasy parent, and different possibilities using different libidinal mechanisms are tried on, played with, and discarded. And if inside and outside can be experienced as emotionally equivalent, one can imagine that creative solutions to the problem of the difference between the sexes might not prove too difficult.

While oedipal longings for the "real" parent can be explored in various ways, longings for the fantasy-created parent never have to be given up. Since oedipal satisfaction as well as merger remains within the child's grasp, the intense drive to create receives further reinforcement.

If your ideas, formed from the people around you, are your mother, then you live in a world where inside and outside, thought and action, abstract and concrete, are merged and blended. Separation and loss, reality and time, can be both tolerated and denied, and the world is your teddy bear. It is at once a very complete and a very lonely place. The way back to object relations is with the created act as a love gift, not to an individual—long ago dismissed as too threatening—but to the world which offered the seeds for your creation. Your gift represents a reflection of yourself and also offers the potential for real involvement with others. The dreamlike, disguised artistic production in turn provides a seed to stimulate the imaginations of many. And since the artist is sensing and attempting to visualize what is missing from the "alternates," the new synthesis will depict a vision of a reconciliation of conflicts, stimulating internal transformations within the field in a manner similar to an analytic interpretation.

A "twin" who represents an accepting and admiring audience as well as a stimulating individual may be essential to this process. The individual relationship allows the ideas to emerge, and the acceptance enables them to take concrete form.

This person will not, as the classical analytic model suggests, externalize a fixed fantasy solution onto the outside world and relate to others "as if" they were his or her particular mother or father. (These transferences exist, to be sure, but they are not the main issue.) Any new person or new experience contains the terror of separateness and loss as well as intense stimulation, but the defense is to attempt to understand, relate to, and thereby master the perceived differences, rather than relate to the similarities, to an internalized mental representation of parental figures. Others will appear to be used—choreographed, as if they were an artist's medium—yet with a powerful intensity of libido and aggression along with an intensely accurate perception of who they are. (Think of the way that Freud used his patients, his friends, and his culture, took them apart, understood new things about himself as well as about them in the process, gave it all back as insight, and went on to his next "piece.") Insight that may occur in relation to the self will result in new identifications and a new fantasy version of the "good mother" within which the threatening "other" is incorporated. Homosexual or heterosexual relationships and fantasies may be used for this purpose, reflecting the artist's capacity to shift identifications easily. A new piece is not misperceived so as to appear to fit a pre-existing puzzle. Instead, the puzzle itself needs to be redone for each extra piece that is added. Since conflicts are continually reworked without ever being fully resolved, this person will remain always open to new experiences, and may appear at once brilliant and childlike.

Since the work IS the loved object with whom the artist is temporarily merged, when it is presented to the world and thereby separated from the self, it is mourned as if it were the loved and lost person.¹ This is tolerable because the object can then be resurrected in a new creation, but not without significant inner struggle; the intense mood swings of many artists

¹ I would like to thank Dr. Shelley Orgel for this and several other significant ideas in this paper.

may be related to this phenomenon. The loss will also enable the person to return temporarily to the world of individuals in the continued search for sustenance. The elation of merger and oedipal victory, loss and conflict, follow one upon the other. (Note that this openness to being taken apart and to continuous re-experience of loss can easily be labeled "masochism.")

I believe that greater distinctions need to be made between children with sensitivities and integrative capacities in, say, the visual or musical arena and those with intense emotional sensitivities; defenses against the expression of these capacities need to be examined as well. Whether the compulsion arises out of an attempt to master an internal disorganizing tendency, as in psychosis, or from a learning disability, from physical illness or defect, or externally from loss or trauma would also be relevant to study. I believe that there is considerable overlap, but it is at these points that the craftsman, the inhibited artist, the psychotic genius, and the person who transcends a traumatic childhood branch off.

I brought these hypotheses into the analysis of Mr. A, and saw for the first time how he used the creative act to bypass the resolution of sexual and aggressive conflicts when having a real object had become too dangerous because of the threat of loss. I will describe a session near the end of the second year of treatment for which I had needed to change the time to forty-five minutes earlier than his usual hour. He had agreed to that time despite the fact that waking up in the morning had become a horror for him, a circumstance which he attributed to the reality of his work schedule as well as to insomnia. So I expected him to be quite unhappy, but was not certain about the extent to which he would be aware of it.

He came to the session having gotten out of bed only minutes before, without even time for his usual cup of coffee. Then, in a manner atypical for him, he reported a series of dream images forming one after another as he lay on the couch, without any sense of needing to associate or even how to do it. My feeling of

having been invited into his dream seemed to be confirmed by the images themselves—one of "a bubble, with a mother" and another of "a bed inside a bar." He agreed with me that he was indeed asleep. The interpretation that abruptly awakened him into a rage was that he had brought his analysis and his bedroom together in order to protect himself from losing either one, and especially to protect me from the intensity of his anger at me for having to change the time, which he had interpreted as a violent act intruding on his routines of daily living. As his rage abated, we began to see how life itself had become, for him, a dreamlike state, within which he could do anything he wanted, but which in fact served to protect him from the violence of the world, and the world from his violent rage. Sexual and aggressive feelings and fantasies that he had expressed thus far could be revealed with relative ease because people were not "real," but a part of himself. His attraction to heavily made-up women could then be understood—looked at not in terms of cosmetics, but in terms of women of his own invention.

He responded by writing a story about Frankenstein creating a woman from the dead, and reported that since my vacation, he had been working on a play based on "Alice in Wonderland." It contained variations on the themes we had been discussing, but he had not connected it to my name at all. This was what he had been doing with the ideas that I was offering him—creating a fantasy/monster Alice from the pieces. He loved the play, but had no idea what to do with it, except perhaps to give it to me. I understood that he was able to use my ideas to create his own version of me, which he could take apart and put together with intense affect; but on a deeper level it was a defense against the wish to use me as a real and separate person, which would involve ripping me into pieces. He could maintain the fantasy that he and I thought alike and thus could avoid conflict, but the analysis and his work were useless to him. And in an analogous way he was unable to use people in the "real world" of theater in order to get what he wanted from them, because that would involve, for him, the destruction of the relationship and of the

person. For the first time I began to envision what might lie behind his seeming lack of transference awareness, an aspect of the "big picture" that he searched for constantly.

Other aspects of his guilt then emerged as he realized how he had used his family, and particularly his older brother, with a powerful intensity to undo previous losses. His attachment to and guilt in relation to this brother at this point had been based less on "repressed homosexuality and competitive aggression" than it was on a need to use him as a way of connecting with the "big picture" of the world of drama, where the city you lived in and the people you lived with did not matter. This "love affair with the world" was his real love, and sharing it with his "twin" was a way of reconnecting with the world of objects in order to bring a piece to life, as well as to assuage his guilt at having used his brother in this way. He realized for the first time that his idealized brother had been, in fact, limited in his talents and his ability to negotiate the world. When his brother died, it confirmed Mr. A's belief in his capacity to devour and destroy people, and made him unwilling to ever resurrect "Frankenstein's monster" again. (He had become a vegetarian just prior to his brother's death, concluding "never eat anything you can't kill.") I began to understand why he would so often stop in the middle of a series of associations in order to ask me what I thought, or if I had any ideas. He wanted me to give him something, to "throw him a bone" (he had often associated to himself as a dog), so that he would not experience the wish to rip me to shreds. (I often found myself conflicted about how to respond at these times. I did not want to "feed" him an empathic remark just for the sake of it or to prevent anger, but he seemed to have no idea why I would not, so that explorations were upsetting without going anywhere. I will come back later to how a different understanding offers a solution to this kind of dilemma.)

As we began to outline these issues, he arranged to freelance through an agent and soon got a small role in a film. He also discovered a way to circulate his written material, and he began to associate for the first time to his early relationship with his

mother. He described his feeling that she loved him "generally but not specifically," as one member of a large family. But if that were true, why was she so devastated when an individual member died? He began to sense that this conviction about her reflected his own conflict between relationships with individuals and his relationship with his career, which he began to describe as a "relationship" in ways that sounded as if he were referring to a person.

He realized that the night job which he professed to hate but never was able to change offered an outlet for his fantasy of making the "big picture" work for him. In this job he was able to "choreograph" a large group of people, sensing what they needed from each other and from him, and making the group "work." But it had to be at night, in this altered state of consciousness, and not "real." He developed the symptom of diminished sexual interest in his woman friend (who progressed from being a "beautiful, made-up woman" to a stimulating and enraging "other") and waking up in the middle of the night to find himself in the act of intercourse.

Then one day he came into his session in a rage, with an intense feeling of frustration. He sensed the presence of the "big picture" permeating every aspect of his life, but he could not see it. And in the analysis, too, he felt that he understood the individual issues from day to day, but could not put them together into the "big picture." Nor could he picture what his relationship with me was all about. I said that his primary relationship seemed to be with what was not there, rather than what was. He was very moved by this idea, and saw that his dead brother was still a very much alive force in his life. He associated to an experience as a young child, soon after the death of a close relative, when he awakened in the middle of the night with the feeling of a powerful invisible force holding him down and making it impossible for him to scream—a more concrete version of the "big picture." And he realized how, prior to the first death of a sibling, he had been very involved with competition, comparing sizes, fighting with friends and siblings, etc. Afterward,

none of that mattered, and he could begin to express himself creatively because he no longer concerned himself with the reality of the people around him. What mattered so much more were the missing spaces that he began to find in ideas, in stories, in relationships. Earlier conflicts seemed to disappear as he saw his role to be filling in the spaces. He began to understand the defensive use of his talents as a way of coping with loss and conflict. Further associations to his mother as the original "big picture" led to his revealing that his mother had, in fact, had a series of "nervous breakdowns" for which she had been hospitalized periodically throughout his childhood. Prior to these interpretations, he had not thought to report the "insignificant fact" of her physical and emotional absences.

In the weeks after these insights he was able to express pleasure at having seen an aspect of this previously unseen force, and he was able to mourn for the brother who had still been so alive for him. He also began to confront his questions about his mother—not just his global sense of not having been loved specifically, but a more complex series of questions about who she was as a person in relation to him. He then realized that there existed several people he had known from earlier years who could potentially be of great help to him. He contacted them, and they responded quite positively. He found an agent and began to work again. Eventually, he became involved in a creative endeavor in a closely allied field in which he proved himself to be remarkably capable of "using" people in a variety of ways. In addition, after becoming aware of his need to be an "analytic vegetarian," he began to appear more goal-directed in his associations. He had a series of dreams involving "getting off the road," and I could begin to point out his defensive wishes to get off of an associative track and into "wonderland." (This was what he had been sensing when he continually asked me if he was "on the right track.") And he began to talk in a meaningful way about content—in his work, in his relationships, and in the transference. He realized that the rage contained and

expressed in his work must have been displeasing to people who want to be entertained. He began to have difficulty writing, which paralleled his sexual difficulty, symptoms that could now be more easily approached in the classical analytic way. Libidinal and aggressive conflict in relation to an individual could enter the picture because now he was less able to use one relationship as a defense against the other, and because he could better tolerate the expression of drive derivatives and rage toward a more differentiated "other." The wish to have my baby and the fear of creating something and losing it related to castration fears in the relationship with his mother. Longings for his loving and supportive father also emerged, and his symptoms abated.

There was another shift in the transference as well, in that he began to challenge me in a more direct and specific way. The ways in which my thoughts differed from his and the subtleties of how he experienced what I had to offer now comprised the area where we often worked. He wanted to know who I was, just as he wanted to know who his mother was, and I felt that it was possible and appropriate for him to figure that out for himself. I did not have to offer information—which would be "throwing him a bone" to fend him off and which he would have no reason to trust. But neither did I have to try desperately to prevent him from figuring it out for himself by attempting to "interpret away" his challenges. "What do you think, Doc?" was something he was entitled to know.

Eventually, significant job opportunities in this allied field opened up, and he terminated, engaged to be married. As oedipal longings entered the treatment, they simultaneously became real possibilities in his life, and he left with a greater capacity to follow his dream.

For the person with intense emotional and perceptual sensitivities and integrative capacities as well as a solution in the sphere of creativity, the analyst will represent both a stimulating

"other" and a responsive audience. This issue needs to be addressed or the patient's essential loneliness and anger will remain, despite work on particular transference manifestations. At worst, the person will feel misunderstood even if the interpretations are accurate, which is the way many artists feel about people analyzing them through their works. I suspect that the tendency has been either to err on the side of being too "classical"—often equated with being anonymous and withholding, leaving the person with intense cannibalistic wishes against an "unintegratable" object and threatening ego disintegration—or to err on the side of being too "empathic" and allowing oneself to be taken into a "selfobject" matrix out of fear of this. (This is what artists mean when they say that analysis will either take away their art, or will be useless.) Such persons' "cannibalistic" wishes to take apart, understand, and use both the analyst and the world around them, and the defenses against these wishes, need to be not only analyzed but accepted. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that cannibalistic fantasies are "bad"—regression, fixation, a defense that needs to be given up, or evidence of unanalyzability. That analytic stance can only serve to increase the rage so often associated with those wishes. For these creative patients, their way of thinking is not only essential, it can "work." While their defensive use of it needs to be examined—by our pointing out parallels between the love affair with the world, with relationships, and with the analyst, to prevent the patient's using one involvement against the other—it need not and cannot be given up. If the thinking style and defenses against the expression of it are examined and accepted, the individual may be more willing and able to look at the transference-based psychosexual interferences with being able to fully love and create with all "lovers."

I suspect that analysts have been reluctant to see this because of envy—not so much of the artists' talent but of their ability to "have their mother and eat her too," as well as jealousy because of the "love affair with the world" that competes with transference

love. Discomfort with the feminine elements of openness to being taken apart, ambiguity, recurrent loss, "masochism," and childbirth is related as well.

Another reason is self-protection. The transference will be different because you will be seen more as yourself, and this will be focused on, or defended against at the same time that distortions from old internalized object relationships also exist. This kind of patient will have what I call the "real-object transference" to the analyst—a phenomenon which, if it is recognized, seems now to be subsumed under such labels as "narcissism," "projective identification," unanalyzability based on "object hunger," too much of a need for a "real" relationship, or lack of the capacity for insight and transference development. I suspect that in such analyses there will be similarities to child analysis. The core need of such an individual is to define the analyst as a separate person, and to use this information to create a new fantasy of him/herself within which the analyst is incorporated. This may be by direct challenge or by creating enactments requiring the analyst's participation; it may be manifested only in the choice of which aspects of the personality come into focus, or in leaving spaces in the material for the analyst to fill in. The relationship between analyst and analysand can be used and challenged, and insight can be returned as a "love gift." But as a piece of analysis is completed, the analyst who offered the responses is also better understood. This "good mother," this time with a slightly different outline, is refound in the new identification. This "new" mental representation is then externalized onto the now "new" analyst, who becomes the one to do the next piece of work on the next issue that lies at the boundary between the analyst's and the analysand's internal worlds.

Thought and action are merged and blended, many levels are experienced simultaneously and shift rapidly, the analyst is perceived accurately, and communication through words in a linear fashion is problematic if not impossible; enactments will

therefore be both inevitable and an essential part of the communication. The form as well as the content of these "free associations"—the "how" as well as the "why"—and the way the analyst is understood and used will encompass the analytic process. The analyst's temporary participation in an enactment will then be evidence not of countertransference but of the willingness to learn another language while preserving one's own. In the areas where analyst and analysand understand each other, the form of the communication can be put into words, thus allowing for the separation, mourning, and redefinition of boundaries so essential to making the creative process "work" both in the consulting room and in life.

In exploring these ideas, we need to consider that certain phenomena that we now view as signs of pathology may represent areas of strength in certain people, and that the pain of these states may arise as much out of the feeling of being misunderstood as from the experiences themselves. (This has implication for the theory of femininity as well. Note that the classical psychoanalytic description of woman—narcissistic, masochistic, less objective, less capable of sublimation, etc.—sounds remarkably like the description of the artist, and that the continual merging and separating involved in her "love affair" with her children require some of the same capacities.)

Sigmund Freud created ideas that transformed the society in which he lived. That he could have access to his inner world so easily is extraordinary, but perhaps more understandable if one considers that the content of his fantasies may have been of less significance to him than their form and the experience of mastery of the world of individuals around him, as well as the experience of presenting his ideas to the world. But if he was able to enact fantasies at this level so well, it is understandable that he might have been unwilling/unable to analyze the form of and motivations behind artistic creation. These underlying issues might also have led him to develop a theory that allowed for both the idealization of the artist and the attribution of negative

personality traits to the creative individual (and woman as well?). It is time for psychoanalysis to take up the arms that were laid down so many years ago.

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