

TO SEE FEELINGLY:
ART AND
PSYCHOANALYSIS



Gilbert J. Rose

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by Gilbert J. Rose

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We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first
time.

T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding" (1942)

We have seen in the last chapter that (1) art anticipated both science and psychoanalysis in stressing the permeability, rather than the separateness, of basic boundaries like inside and outside, subjective and objective; (2) experimental work and theoretical refinement in psychoanalysis gradually has resulted in a change from the closed to the open system model of the organism; (3) along with this, the primary and secondary processes may be viewed as being in interaction rather than as sharply demarcated; (4) this opens the organizational mode of the primary process to the possibility of development.

This brings us to a final contribution of art. Among other boundaries that are relative rather than firm are those between affect, on the one hand, and perception and thought, on the other. Art helps restore an awareness of the degree to which feeling and sensuousness always

remain integral to thought and perception. Emotion is a subject on which art is especially qualified to speak because, if it has to do with anything, art has to do with emotional experience. One definition even has it: "one way of identifying a work of art [is as] an object made for emotional experience" (Kubler 1962, 80). Langer argues for the central role of feeling in aesthetic experience, as does Dufrenne. Feeling is the nodal point at which subject and object merge in a unique sort of "communion"-the aesthetic experience. "Instead of being a flight from the real. . . art illuminates the real. But it does so only through feeling. . . .In art. . . the affective and the sensuous-feeling and perceiving-adumbrate each other" (Casey 1973, xxxiii).

Clinical observation, like the experience of art, shows that thought and perception tend to be invested with feeling. But theory historically clung to the idea that affect was sequestered from thought and perception.

When, as part of the closed-system model, Freud placed the primary and secondary processes in opposition to each other, it was as part of a yet more fundamental dichotomy-that of the pleasure and reality principles. Affectivity was viewed as essentially a secretory and vasomotor discharge into one's own body without reference to the external world. Therefore, affects, along with the primary process, were subsumed together under the pleasure principle. There they long remained as second-class citizens, isolated from and alien to perception and "pure" secondary process thought, which were directly related to the outside world and firmly ensconced under the reality principle. Though Freud (1933) later recognized that anxiety was a signal of impending danger and not a transformation of libido, not until recently was it appreciated that affect is not the antithesis of thought but basic to it as an early form of communication (Modell 1973; Ross 1975; Basch 1976).

In addition, a further complication was that the province of pleasure was largely restricted to the gratification which accompanies the *lowering* of a heightened level of instinctual drive tension. There were few exceptions to this, notably a brief early reference to the pleasure

inherent in *activity* (Freud 1905, 95-96). Freud maintained, moreover, “that pleasure remains throughout life what it was in the [earliest] state . . . and that development to maturity consists in the superimposition of a relatively thin layer governed by the reality principle which is an unwelcome and enforced detour” (Schachtel 1959, 62).

Infant observation, however, shows that following the first few weeks of life infants no longer experience all stimuli from the environment as disturbances leading to unpleasure. What Freud described, essentially, was not positive pleasure but relief from unpleasure. Almost from the outset, the pleasure in directed, sustained *activity* is distinct from the pleasure of a sudden *decrease* of accumulated excitation and returning to a state of untroubled rest. In contrast to the tranquility of quiescence, exploratory play and a growing relatedness to reality offer a source of inexhaustible stimuli to the senses, thoughts, and motor functions. Shortly after birth “the nature of pleasure . . . is no longer restricted to the negative experience of relief from irritating disturbance . . . but now includes positive, joyful expansion of relatedness to the new and rapidly enlarging environment. . . . The former is a return to a stable state of rest, the latter the enjoyment . . . of the process of relating to the world” (64).

More recent observations in the first year of life (Shapiro & Stern 1980) confirm the conclusion that pleasure is also derived from and embedded in stimulus-seeking. Significantly, the affective components of this are a sine qua non for establishing object ties in the outside world of reality. This means that the reality principle is *not* in fundamental opposition to the pleasure principle. On the contrary, it is pleasure-seeking that guides the developing ego toward the most gratification in its relations with the real world (Harrison 1986).

Thus, infant observation highlights the shortcomings of the closed-system model and the affect theory that is subsumed under it. This places us in a better position to appreciate that the open-system model carries its own implications for a theory of affects and, possibly, our understanding of aesthetics as well.

The primary process is associated with release of tension; the secondary process with the building of tension. If, as the open-system model holds, they are not segregated under the pleasure and reality principles, respectively, and in opposition to each other, but rather, their working together and mutual enhancement underlies all thought and perception, then their interplay entails a continuous flux of tension and release. It is precisely such tension/release that is at the core of feeling-in fact, is its central dynamic (Arnheim 1956). One must conclude, therefore, on theoretical grounds, that feeling is embodied in the interplay of primary process release and secondary process tension inherent in all thought and perception. In short, the dynamics of feeling invest thought and perception *from the outset*.

Let us spell this out more specifically. Tension reduction and “letting go” accompany the movement from secondary to primary process-departing from the stringencies of logic, knowledge of reality, delineation of sharp boundaries, and heading for the relaxation of imagination, togetherness, wholeness, dedifferentiation-and all points in the direction of quiescence, narcissistic withdrawal, and passivity. The opposite movement, from primary process to secondary process, is active, object-oriented, and associated with the stimulation and excitement of challenge. Of course, since this is a microscopic and hypothetical description of the rapid, oscillating interchange between primary and secondary processes, the actual quality of the affects would depend largely on the nature of the *ideational* components (Brenner 1982).

It should now be possible to enlarge upon Langer’s philosophical proposition that the arts enable one to think and perceive more feelingly. First, however, it is necessary to clarify something that has been implicit in the discussion, which has been limited largely to form rather than content-a tactical emphasis meant to highlight the role, in theory, that form alone plays in generating affect.

However, in order to avoid the reductionist implications that such a tactic entails, let us admit that, for all practical purposes, form and content are often inseparable; content without

form cannot be communicated; and form without content cannot exist because the very way the form itself is organized conveys content. Even where there is no discursive content, as in abstract art or music, the structure of the imaginative mode of the primary process bears unconscious wishes embedded within it. The principles of organization of the primary process—that opposites may coexist (as in music), or that time is reversible (as in painting, by transforming time into spatial relations)—are themselves the expression of the *content* of standard, ubiquitous, and universal unconscious wishes. Such unconscious content, embedded in the *form* of the primary process, may well account for the lowering of tension associated with the primary process.

Having made the distinction between form and content, the “how” and the “what” of a work of art, and having qualified it, let us return to the question, “How do the arts help us to perceive and think more feelingly?” The contribution that the content of a work of art makes to more feelingful thought and perception is maximal in literature or representational art and minimal in abstract art or music. In any case, whatever the art form, the enhanced interplay between the formal modes of the primary and secondary process generates a continual flux of tension, release of tension, then renewed challenge and rebuilding of tension. Since tension/release/tension is the heart of affect, such primary and secondary process interaction is associated with a flow of affect.

Moreover, just as the arts stimulate the advancement of primary process imagination by encouraging its interplay with the problemsolving logic and knowledge of the secondary process, (as we have reasoned and illustrated with examples from Escher and Monet), the arts also help *refine* the feelings that accompany this interplay. In other words, art educates the emotions; there is, therefore, a sound psychological justification for the belief that a healthy and vigorous state of the arts is of central importance not only to the individual but to society at large; for “a society that neglects [artistic development], gives itself up to formless emotion” (Langer 1957, 74).

Aside from content, the arts restore sensuousness to perception and emotional coloration to thought by speeding the traffic between primary and secondary processes. These bodily qualities are inherent in thought and perception and always remain to some extent. But in the inevitable attrition of everyday life they get calloused over. Of course, a certain amount of screening is not only useful but even essential. Without it, one might well be flooded, that is, traumatized, by the bombardment of stimulation impinging upon one's adaptive resources. Especially in our present world, overstimulation leads to familiar syndromes: on the one hand, counterphobic, frenetic, and insatiable stimulus-hunger; on the other hand, phobic, numbed withdrawal from all potentially threatening stimuli.

When I suggest that the arts restore the feeling and sensuousness that were once integral to thought and perception but which were isolated to protect against traumatic flooding, I mean to indicate that they restore an optimal *degree* of stimulation—a balance of distance and closeness, neither escapist nor overpowering (G. J. Rose 1980). The various forms of art counteract some of the inevitable and necessary jading effect of everyday life. They reinvest the quality of experience with some of the freshness it had in the beginning—but now in the light of the broader realities and heightened awareness of maturity.

Why is it refreshed? Because returning to the familiar we find that, just because it had become familiar, it was no longer known. Everyday thought and perception easily slide into the misleading laziness of common sense. The arts recover metaphorical abilities which, far from being a substitute for reason, lie at the heart of creative thought. The merging and re-separation from art is a way of relieving dullness, taking a fresh look, intuiting the possibility of new connections, discovering the novel in the midst of the familiar, the familiar in the strange, an unsuspected unity amid variability, and vice versa.^{[21](#)}

Poetry is a way of reviving the physical and semantic resonances of a language deadened through overuse. Martha Graham said something similar about the function of dance: making

apparent again the hidden realities behind the accepted symbols. And Picasso spoke of wishing to wake up the mind by drawing it in a direction that it is not used to—setting up the most unexpected relationships possible, provoking a movement of contradictory tensions and oppositions.

Finally, by facilitating the reintegration of emotion with thought and perception, art illuminates reality in a particular way—from within. This is related to the power of imaginative insight or empathy—the capacity to enter other minds and situations and intuit them from within—first set forth by Vico as a mode of understanding in its own right. The kind of illumination that art provides does not take place by virtue of the discovery of new factual knowledge or concepts but, rather, fresh percepts—without which, concepts, alone, are blind. Monet did not discover light or postulate its structure in the form of either particles or waves. His paintings of sensuous form evoke feelings that reveal light anew. Likewise, a crucifixion is not a lesson in anatomy; a Vermeer does not teach Dutch interior design—it is, more precisely, an entree into a world of tenderness and gentleness (Dufrenne 1953, 527).

In other words, with due regard for the fact that form and content are basically inseparable, one might yet argue that a work of art is true not in what it recounts—it may, after all, be literally a lie, or surreal—but how: its sensuousness awakens feelings and reunites them with thought and perception. I suggest that it is this inner reintegration of feeling, thought, and perception in the mind of the viewer that permits a transitory sense of union with the art object—the characteristic aesthetic moment. It draws upon that earliest form of knowing: the transient blurring of the boundaries between self and other, inside and outside—“fusing” with the outside world momentarily and then re-separating. It is this type of mastery—through temporary oneness followed by redelineation—that illuminates the art work from within. It allows us to grasp its reality—not so much from the point of view of objective knowledge as from the world of feeling it opens up, having sampled it.

Toward the end of *King Lear*, the Earl of Gloster, though sightless, appears to be the only character who seems to understand what is going on. Lear, marveling at this, declares: “No eyes in your head . . . yet you see how this world goes.” To which, the blind Gloster replies: “I see it feelingly.”

The performance by Billy Whitelaw of Samuel Beckett’s fifteen-minute play (or monologue) *Rockaby* condenses and illustrates the foregoing discussion of concept, emotion, and percept becoming one-of our becoming one with a work of art-and of knowing from within, something old yet for the first time. With almost no words, no movement, and no scenery, this great drama and interpretation compress the weight and desolation of a lonely old woman’s descent to death-its banality, its horror, its peace.

She had searched for “another creature like herself”-“one other living soul.” Now she sits in her mother’s old rocker. The only word she speaks on stage is “More,” repeated four times. The other words are scant, incantatory, colorless language, recorded by the actress on tape. The phrase, “time she stopped,” serves as a refrain. Her eyes have closed. The rocking has stopped. The single light that holds her face has become almost one with the surrounding blackness.

In the longest of Beckett pauses, we watch the light within the face’s hollow eyes and chalky cheeks dim, too. During the long stillness, the actress doesn’t so much as twitch an eyelash-and yet, by the time the darkness is total, we’re left with an image that’s different from the one we’d seen a half minute earlier. . . . What remains is a death mask, so devoid of blood it could be a faded, crumbling photograph. And somehow, even as the face disintegrates, we realize that it has curled into a faint baby’s smile. . . . And there you have it. . . . We at last reach the “close of a long day.” Then Mr. Beckett and Miss Whitelaw make time stop, and it’s a sensation that no theatregoer will soon forget (Rich 1984).

If one reads *Rockaby* after having seen it on stage, one is forced to wonder at the near-

irrelevance of the words. Would it have the same-or nearly the same-effect if it were chanted, say, in Latin? Still more would one have to wonder about the role of "facts." What are the facts? A lonely old lady dies in a rocking chair. Her spoken thoughts turn to silence. Open eyes close. Rocking motion ceases. Light turns to darkness.

True, a microanalysis of the words invites a flight of imaginative speculation. One might, exercising "analytic" ingenuity, read into the script a transition from self-object differentiation back to selfobject mirroring and to rapprochement with the primal mother-the rocker serving as a transitional object. Beyond that and reaching further back one might discern the concretism of words-rocker = rock her-and fusion with the mother. "Rocker" becomes a symbol of time-life itself. *Rockaby* invites the silent association, "Rockaby baby-bough breaks-down comes baby." So, from the beginning, *Rockaby* foretells that life is foredoomed. And autoerotic rhythm plays accompaniment. Among the last lines are, "rock her off / stop her eyes / fuck life." Is this a masturbatory litany with "eye" a pun for "I," as a waning sense of self heralds the approaching climax of *le petit mort* Etc., etc.

All of which, in the final "analysis," perhaps, being almost as irrelevant to the impact of *Rockaby* as moonlight to the "Moonlight Sonata."

What lies at the heart of the emotional impact of this poetic drama, I suggest, is not such inferred latent unconscious content, and least of all the conscious narrative manifest content, but, rather, the form. It resembles the spare melody and three-beat meter of the sonata. Like the sonata, an accumulation of waves of mounting feeling are concentrated within this simple constantly recurring structure; they focus intense, laser-like attention on each swollen particle of minute change-in syntax, intonation, tempo and pause, shadow and light-to the point that the boundaries between thought, percept, and feeling dissolve, illuminating and reunifying present experience.

What does the creative artist draw on from within himself? What does he attempt to shape? How? To what end?

For the creative person, the inner processes achieve objectification in the form of fictional characters and objects of art. The creative work is a building up and melting down, again and again, a losing and refinding oneself by proxy, a rapid oscillation between imagination and knowledge of reality; in more technical terms, between primary and secondary processes, and between self-images and object-images within the ego. It continues until the work itself takes on a reality and autonomy of its own, whereupon the author also becomes free, or at least freer, to go on to something else. Samuel Beckett (1955 p. 302) writes: "For to go on means going from here, means finding me, losing me, vanishing and beginning again, a stranger first, then little by little the same as always, in another place."

As Dewey (1934) emphasized, aesthetic experience is continuous with the normal processes of living. Creative work serves the same function for the artist as any person's work for himself: externalizing inner processes and connecting the person more intimately to the outside world. In addition, however, the artist draws upon his sensitivity to past experience and traumatic intensity of stimulation. He attempts to master this past by reshaping aspects of himself, of space and of time, in the externalized forms of his work. His work objectifies his experience and subjectifies his world. As a result of an interplay of imagination and knowledge, the artwork strikes a new balance between internal and external. What began as the common task of mastering one's personal past, becomes for the creative artist a process of externalizing and transcending it-to disclose new aspects of reality itself.

As I have reasoned elsewhere (G. J. Rose 1980), aesthetic form has a biological function in the sense that it helps to sharpen the coordinates of orientation as to time, place, and person. Pursuing the same direction, the present discussion explores how the arts further facilitate mastery: expediting the interaction of primary process imagination and secondary process

knowledge of reality that underlies all perception and thought.

Summarizing the important consequences of this quickened interchange of knowledge and imagination: (1) The objectification of primary process modes of organization opens the imagination to the possibility of growth and elaboration in the light of secondary process knowledge of reality. (2) The flux of tension and release that accompanies the interplay of primary and secondary processes is experienced as a flow of affect; the interplay itself helps refine the quality of this affect. (3) The refined affect associated with the traffic of primary and secondary processes restores sensuousness to perception and emotional coloration to thought. (4) By this fresh integration of feeling with thought and perception, ordinary reality becomes newly illuminated from within.

Psychoanalysis, like art, also awakens one to submerged and split-off currents of feeling. As in the aesthetic experience, during the course of analysis affect also becomes more available, better tolerated, more complex, and better expressed. Both the psychoanalytic and the aesthetic experiences are conducive to a type of mastery that is characterized by the inner reintegration of feelings with thought and perception. One must therefore inquire into the differences between these two experiences, the clinical and the creative.

In the attrition of daily life, percepts are denied, or their emotional impact attenuated or isolated. These are defensive efforts to anticipate the danger of traumatic overstimulation and dampen it down in advance. Functioning is protected, but at the cost of becoming more routinized and colorless. Art counteracts these tendencies through the fresh impact of sensuous forms. The re-assimilation of emotion to thought and perception leads to the illumination of the real from within-the characterise fusion-reseparation experience of the aesthetic moment.

And psychoanalysis? In accordance with the closed-system model of the organism, Freud theorized that affect and the primary process are sequestered together, under the auspices of the

pleasure principle-in opposition to the reality principle and secondary process thought. Ego defenses are drawn up like pioneer wagons in a circle against the onslaught of stimuli and protect the mind's tendency to withdraw to the lowest level of stimulation approximating the quiescence of a state of nirvana.

In actual practice, however, it often appears that this is a secondary restructuring. Contemporary psychoanalysis is conducted more in accordance with the open-system model of the organism. Through the interpretation of unconscious defenses both within the ongoing patient-therapist relationship and as it unfolds in current life as well as the developmental history, memories are recovered directly and via the transference. For all that has been said against it, verbalization is, of course, the single most important instrument in this process. Since repression essentially consists of a disruption of the link between the repressed idea in the unconscious and its *verbal* representation in the preconscious system (Freud 1915), it is verbalization that restores the connection and thus undoes the repression of feelingful memories.

Both the psychoanalytic and the aesthetic experiences tend to overcome various splits that occur under the traumatic impact of inner and outer stimulation: repressed memories, isolated feelings, denied percepts. Psychoanalysis undoes repression and, largely if not wholly through verbalization, reunites memory and affect. Art counteracts denial and, through sensuous forms, reunites perception with affect. Through different routes, they both make affect available again for reintegration with thought and perception. Both the psychoanalytic and the aesthetic experiences thus tend to restore wholeness, "reuniting our original nature, making one of two, and healing the state of man" (Plato, p. 158).

To compress the issue of increased mastery into more precise intrapsychic terms: both art and psychoanalysis strengthen the integrative function of the ego; this helps overcome splits in the ego caused by denial (Freud 1940a & 1940b) and repression and broadens the scope of the

ego's reality-testing, thus enhancing mastery of inner and outer reality.

Like an ongoing exploration, the problem of the overlap of the psychoanalytic and the aesthetic experiences raises fresh questions. One might ask, "Why add further, possibly needless, complexity to unresolved issues?" After all, the means by which psychoanalysis exerts its therapeutic action is still a matter of considerable debate within the field; perhaps as much so as the ways in which art brings about an aesthetic experience. Why compound the situation by adding one unsolved question upon another?

And yet . . . one cannot help wonder: is the affect that is made available through the recovery of repressed memories by the (verbal) psychoanalytic process the "same" as that which is tapped in the aesthetic undoing of split-off percepts? Does the former represent a "horizontal" split and the latter a "vertical" one? What about the role of internalization?

Any contemporary discussion of how change takes place—whether in the course of normal growth and development or aided by psychoanalysis—must take account of the fundamental position of internalization. The central importance of internalization in current thinking has superseded the traditional faith either in insight (achieved through interpretation), or gratification (provided by a beneficent, nonjudgmental environment).

The mechanisms by which internalization operate are (1) through the establishment of a gratifying involvement followed by (2) the experience of incompatibility in that involvement (Behrends & Blatt, 1985). In other words, interactions with others that had formerly been gratifying and then disrupted are transformed into one's own enduring functions and characteristics.

One cannot help noting a striking formal similarity between the structure of internalization and that of art. For internalization to take place the *opposite elements* of

gratification and incompatibility need to have been experienced *in sequence*. Art, on the other hand, is characterized by a *dynamic equilibrium of opposites*, each needing the other for its fulfillment. Among these are tension and release, control and ambiguity, variability and unity—but, perhaps above all, continuity and discontinuity in time, space and personal identity (G. J. Rose 1980).

Are such parallels between aesthetic form and psychic process anything more than linguistic similarities between constructs used to describe different phenomena or are they causal in nature (Spitz 1985)? This touches on the core of the deconstructionist critic's tenet that the language of a text tends to be circular and refer to itself or other languages and not some extratextual reality. It is similar to Spence's (1982) question as to whether psychoanalytic interpretation taps the "truth" or merely exploits the flexibility of language. Being beyond my philosophical expertise to judge,²² I subscribe to Alfred

North Whitehead's position that the test of an idea is not its ultimate "truth" but its ability to stimulate new and interesting thought.

Putting aside the philosophical merits of the question, therefore, let us pursue a bit further one implication of the similarity between aesthetic structure and the process of internalization. In the course of normal growth and development, the child's favorable experience with the mother's responsive mirroring gradually becomes generalized through imaginary companions and transitional phenomena into the world of real relationships. Gradually experiencing an increasing discrepancy or incompatibility between inner wishes and outer reality, these interactions are internalized in the form of a trusting yet challenging and critical interplay between one's own imagination and knowledge. In psychoanalysis, too, the benevolent yet detached ambience of the analytic relationship becomes internalized in the form of an increasing freedom to experience one's thoughts and feelings and at the same time permitting them to interact in the light of judgment and experience.

Even though the concept of internalization pertains to such human relationships rather than inanimate objects, does something analogous to internalization take place in the course of repeated, intensive involvement with aesthetic experiences? Stated most baldly, can art induce inner changes in some way comparable to the emotional maturation that takes place both in psychoanalysis as well as normal development?

One hastens to add that it would be misleading to imply that the psychoanalytic and aesthetic experiences are interchangeable with each other or with normal growth. The analyst may be called upon to exercise whatever gift he may have for artistic sensitivity but his work produces no art; the creative artist may occasionally provide an experience of therapeutic value, but he undertakes no responsibility for ongoing treatment. Moreover, it is a familiar fact that emotional maturation does not necessarily take place with any of the above. Conversely, it should be no surprise that major maturation can and usually does continue to unfold well into adulthood without the benefit of psychoanalysis (Emde 1985).

To put it in literary terms: to transform tragedy, meaning inexorability, via various means including even comedy, meaning chance, into an increased measure of choice is the promise of growth. Neither art nor treatment guarantee growth. What they do is to draw on the wellsprings of feeling, via aesthetic form and memory, helping to reintegrate it with thought and perception as in the beginning. This is a form of inner mastery which is conducive to growth.

Yet, while insisting on the separate uniqueness of psychoanalysis, aesthetics and growth, would it not be a logical extension of this discussion, to wonder (if only half-aloud): Might the sentience of the aesthetic experience also lead, at least theoretically, to reviving and reintegrating dormant memories? Conversely, may the reordering of psychoanalysis also open one more fully to the aliveness of our teeming surround?

It is time to step back from the outer reaches of speculation, return to the firmer ground of

clinical experience, and conclude with a final vignette.

A phone call came in from an internist colleague referring a new patient. A German-born woman with depressive symptoms, she was the daughter of a Nazi officer. I began to demur. He interrupted: "Try anyway."

We worked together over the course of several years. Much of it centered around her early identification with and idealization of her father, his skill and generosity, followed by her severe disillusionment in him. Hitler came into power when she was nine years of age. By age eleven she was detesting her father's posturing in his S.S. uniform, his vulgarity, brutality, sentimentality. As an early teenager in the Hitler Youth she knew and did not know what was going on. She befriended a Jewish girlfriend who was later sent to Dachau. She began to know about Dachau by age seventeen (1942), but denied it. The next year her finance was lost on the Russian front, and this she could no longer deny. By the following year, at nineteen, she was actively resisting. Tormented with guilt for not having let herself realize what she did not wish to acknowledge, she berated herself for not having resisted earlier. It was probably this factor which, after the war, led her to marrying an ex-prisoner of the Nazis. He turned out to be as much of a bully as her father, and thus her married life consisted largely of joyless, expiatory slavishness to him and their children.

The treatment was successful in large measure. It turned largely upon dealing with the split between her masochistic attachment to her father, on the one hand, and what she knew and did not want to know, on the other. Integrating memories, perceptions, and feelings, and working this through in the transference, she achieved greater mastery over her past and became freer to assert herself in her marriage and career.

She arrived for her last session and, with a good deal of feeling, said that there were many things about the treatment she deeply appreciated, but one above all. Still under the influence of

earlier teaching as to the primacy of insight in the analytic process, I half-expected a tribute for a particularly canny piece of reconstruction or interpretation and the illumination it brought. I anticipated feeling proud and modest. The truth lay elsewhere.

She was now able once again, she said, to bear the intensity of highly emotional music. Instead of fearing that she might feel threatened by its intensity and compelled to avoid it (lest she be overpowered by affects, thoughts, and images flooding over her?) she could now listen with pleasure. There was one especially beautiful piece-the *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* of Villa-Lobos-and it so happened she had a tape of it in her car outside. Did she wish me to play it, I asked? Indeed she did! She went to get it and we listened to the first aria together.

A rich soprano voice ascends softly and lyrically, swelling, lifting, and subsiding in an unbroken romantic melodic line flowing over the pizzicato accompaniment of a dozen violincelli. The music maintains a delicately subtle tension between the continuity of the melodic voice and the discontinuity of its plucked accompaniment. One's senses are alert and soaring and, paradoxically, in a state of deep repose at the same time. In short, one experiences that remarkable characteristic of the aesthetic experience: opposite states are present simultaneously in a combination of hyperacuity and tranquility.

We sat in silence after the music ended, both of us moved. She arose, shook hands, said, "For this, I thank you." And departed.

Somewhere, William Carlos Williams wrote, "This, in the end, comes perhaps to the occupation of the physician after a lifetime of careful listening: setting down on paper the inchoate poem of the world."

Is this, in the end, what comes to the patient after successful analysis: assimilating emotion to thought and perception-feelings to meanings?

And if this mastery is the fruit of analytic integration, is it not congruent and complementary to that of the aesthetic experience?

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Notes

- [21](#) The Russian formalists earlier in this century put forward the idea that the function of art is to defamiliarize or “make stranger” the world, to overcome the deadening effect of

habit in consciousness.

22 This “ontological” question is classically raised in a metaphysical context having to do with proof of the existence of God.