NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Freudian Aesthetics:
A Survey of Psychoanalytic Theories of Art Relevant to Art Therapy

Coleen Gold

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art Therapy and Art Education

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts at

Concordia University

Montréal, Québec, Canada

March 1989

ISBN 0-315-49099-3

ABSTRACT

Freudian Aesthetics:
A Survey of Psychoanalytic Theories of Art
Relevant to Art Therapy

Coleen Gold

This thesis surveys psychoanalytic aesthetic theories and Freudian ideas that have contributed to a conception of art as therapeutic. Freud's theories of art are outlined, from material based largely on Fuller and Spector. Ideas of writers who extend or modify Freud's theories towards the establishment of a psychoanalytic aesthetic, including Spitz, Kris, and Ricoeur, are presented. Developments of Freud's theories of art by object relations theorists are discussed. Some theories of art will be described in detail including Freud's sublimation theory, Klein's model of art as reparation in the depressive position and Winnicott's theory of transitional phenomena. Thus, a line of development is traced, beginning with Freud, who hinted at the therapeutic function of art by emphasizing the instinctual elements that motivate and are made manifest in art, continuing through the adaptive (ego-psychology), object-relational (Klein) and environmental (Winnicott) theories to arrive at Milner, who advocated art therapy and incorporated the use of art into psychoanalysis.

To Ron

Acknowledgement

I wish to express my appreciation to Peter Byrne and Nancy Humber. Their wisdom and guidance during my training as an art therapist have been invaluable to me. I would especially like to thank Peter for support during the writing of this thesis and for his dedicated thesis editing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The ideas presented in this thesis are pursued from an art therapy student's point of view. The subject of psychoanalytic aesthetics is large and complex and my intention in taking on this project is to attempt to understand the concepts and to begin to be familiar with the field.

At the end of my art therapy course work I felt that I had been exposed to many interesting ideas but was uncertain about the location of art therapy, and myself as an art therapist in training, in all the theory. I used the task of writing a thesis as an opportunity to explore this question more deeply. During my M.A. course work I found I was increasingly drawn to Freud's work, both academically and personally, and entered into psychoanalysis myself. I began reading randomly about psychoanalytic aesthetics and found writers who addressed some of the questions that I was concerned with. I have found the ideas of Freud, Ricoeur, Winnicott and Milner particularly stimulating.

It seems in retrospect that what I did in the course of preparing this thesis was to return to Freud and 're-work'

my way back towards art therapy. The result is by no means definitive and it represents only one of the many possible pathways available to art therapists. However, it reflects my efforts at 'scratching the surface' of theory that interests me, an inquiry that is ongoing.

Freud's theory of psychoanalysis and ideas about art have pervaded art therapy in one form or another. In some cases they have determined a clinical method or developed into an art therapy theory. Often, they can be found transformed into art therapy jargon: For example, art therapists identify 'condensations and displacements' in the patient's art work and encourage 'sublimation'. Some of these concepts have become art therapy maxims and have taken on a life of their own, sometimes quite removed from their Freudian origins.

This thesis traces a line of development from Freud's ideas about art through object relations theory to art therapy and suggests that Freudian-derived theories of art are relevant to the formulation of art therapy theory. A variety of Freudian ideas that have contributed to a conception of art as therapeutic is surveyed.

The first chapter briefly outlines Freud's attitude towards art. The next chapter discusses Freud's concept of

sublimation. In Chapter Three the efforts of various writers towards the establishment of a psychoanalytic aesthetic theory will be described, including the elaborations and modifications of Freud's ideas about art by Fuller, Spitz, Ricoeur and others. The fourth and final chapter describes developments of Freud's original ideas via object relations theory. I refer to the research of Spector and Fuller throughout the thesis.

Some theories of art are described in detail including Freud's sublimation theory, Klein's model of art as reparation in the depressive position and Winnicott's theory of transitional phenomena. Certain themes are addressed throughout the thesis such as the nature of a psychoanalytic aesthetic, the relationship between psychopathology and creativity, and the therapeutic potential of art.

The scope of this thesis has been limited to Freudian and Freudian-derived theories of art. It is recognized that other psychoanalytic schools have made valuable contributions. Beginning with Freud, who hinted at the therapeutic function of art by emphasizing the instinctual elements that motivate and are made manifest in art, the thesis continues through the adaptive (ego-psychology), object-relational (Klein) and environmental (Winnicott)

theories to arrive at Milner, who advocated art therapy and incorporated the use of art into psychoanalysis.

The reach of this thesis stops short of significant recent developments, such as post-modernism, post-structuralism and psycho-criticism. The intention is to review concepts that may be familiar to art therapists, to trace their Freudian roots and maintain the pertinence of psychoanalytic aesthetic theory to art therapy. Possibilities for future elaborations would include a more comprehensive survey of Freudian-derived aesthetics, and an evaluative discussion and description of how these ideas have been or may be translated into clinical art therapy practice and theory. Throughout this thesis the masculine gender is used when non-specific gender references are intended.

Psychoanalytic aesthetics is a collection of material in the process of being defined, developed and debated. Positions range within this eclectic field which is subjected to criticism from within and without. For example, Adrian Stokes bases his art criticism on a psychoanalytic explication of aesthetics while Roger Fry argues that psychoanalysis is irrelevant to aesthetics, which, he claims, is separate from all other human experience. Some of these criticisms will be discussed in Chapter Two and the comments of writers who offer various possibilities towards

a psychoanalytic aesthetic will be presented in Chapter Three.

The following citations, from writers with philosophy and art history backgrounds, represent attempts to identify the relationship of their disciplines to psychoanalysis and to determine the degree to which they can currently be said to meet.

Fuller:

> Although I do not think that aesthetics is reducible to psychoanalysis, I do feel that it can serve to illuminate significant elements which are not readily reachable through any other discipline.[1]

Spector:

> Freud stimulated others through ... his impressive formulation of ideas and techniques, which were not primarily intended as aesthetic, but which have had a great impact on several generations of critics, artists, and writers.[2]

Hofstadter and Kuhns:

> Here (in psychoanalysis) there are accounts of how symbols are formed and how they function, of the psychology of creativity, and of the psychological mechanisms whereby art is produced and responded to. Philosophy has yet to make use of the rich material that psychoanalysis offers. The psychoanalytic theory of art cannot come into its own, philosophically, until

---

[1]Peter Fuller, Art and Psychoanalysis, p. 10.

[2]Jack J. Spector, The Aesthetics of Freud, p. 145.

> philosophy fully exploits the psychoanalytic notions of art and artist.[3]

Spitz:

> Psychoanalysts have made many forays into the aesthetic realm ... Likewise, smaller numbers of philosophers, art historians, and literary critics have commented on the usefulness of psychoanalysis ... But there has been no thoroughgoing attempt to catalog or structure this dialogue between aesthetics and psychoanalysis.[4]

These writers approach psychoanalysis with different purposes. Spector asks these questions of psychoanalytic aesthetics:

> How does form evolve from its origins in the chaotic unconscious, and how does it provide us with its pleasures and satisfactions? What role does the ego or controlling consciousness play in relation to unconscious or repressive forces, and to what extent can the insights of psychoanalysis guide us to an understanding of the productive processes of the artist, on the one hand, and the appreciation of the spectator on the other?[5]

And, Spitz contends that psychoanalysis can offer aestheticians information regarding:

> (1) the nature of the creative work and experience of the artist, (2) the interpretation of works of art, and (3)

---

[3]Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns, Philosophies of Art and Beauty, p. xix.

[4]Ellen Handler Spitz, Art and Psyche, p. 1.

[5]Spector, p. x.

the nature of the aesthetic encounter with works of art.[6]

Many factors complicate the establishment of a psychoanalytic aesthetic, beginning with the confusion caused by the perceived contradictions in Freud's writing. Definitions of concepts like aesthetics and creativity vary and many of the concepts involved in the discussion, such as the nature of transcendence and form, are elusive.

An attempt to deal with the debate whether art is regressive or adaptive has been made by suggesting that the healthy part of the artist's personality is responsible in the creation of the art work, or that the art-making is keeping the individual healthy. One example of this is Freud's suggestion that as long as Leonardo successfully sublimated his latent homosexuality into his art, the intensity of the conflict was reduced.[7] For some, the contradiction is a non-issue: Paul Ricoeur uses Freud's conclusion about Leonardo to indicate that the art is both the symptom and the cure.[8]

---

[6]Spitz, p. 10.

[7]Spector, p. 54.

[8]Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 174.

While Ricoeur thinks of art as conflict and resolution, and advocates an oneiric (art as dream) model, Ernst Kris would prefer to highlight the "synthetic, integrative, and adaptive"[9] aspects of art; art as mastery. What is the relationship of mastery to cure? What makes a sublimation work and then not work? Freud stipulated that the artist has a special gift not found in the neurotic, which enables him to sublimate his instincts in art and avert neurosis. Can this creative gift be cultivated?

These questions provoked by psychoanalytic aesthetic theory about the therapeutic potential of art are considered here to be germane to art therapy. However, we must add the following caveat: Psychoanalytic aesthetics is distinct from psychoanalytic practice which in turn is distinct from art therapy. Thus, the goal of this thesis is not to argue for an art therapy based on the principles of psychoanalytic aesthetics as described here but to survey psychoanalytic theories of art that are relevant to an understanding of art therapy.

---

[9]Spitz, p. 6.

CHAPTER ONE

FREUD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ART

Freud inquires into aesthetics primarily for its implications for psychoanalytic theory.[1] An understanding of the creative man is seen by Freud as relevant to the psychology of the normal individual. Just as the symptomatic behavior of the neurotic is regarded as an extreme of the same mental phenomena which give rise to the parapraxes of the average man, so can the study of genius, child's play, day-dreaming and art-making lead to a greater understanding of the human mind in general.[2]

Freud always thought of himself as a scientist and of psychoanalysis as a natural science. However, if Freud was comfortable with the rational and empirical, he was equally fascinated by the romantic and unknown; "He sought a pathway leading from his science to art and culture."[3]

Freud's views on art are unclear since his writings on the subject are sporadic and appear to be contradictory. Freud neither intends nor claims to elucidate an aesthetic theory.

---

[1]Spector, p. viii.

[2]Ibid., p. 53.

[3]Ibid., p. 9.

He admits to an inadequate understanding and appreciation of art, beginning the Michelangelo essay with the following disclaimer:

> ... I am no connoisseur in art, but simply a layman. I have often observed that the subject-matter of works of art has a stronger attraction for me than their formal and technical qualities, though to the artist their value lies first and foremost in these latter. I am unable rightly to appreciate many of the methods used and the effects obtained in art.[4]

Ricoeur reminds us that, although Freud elucidated a metapsychology and a world view, his research into art could only be "analogic,"[5] an application of the theory of psychoneuroses without the verification of the method (requiring a relationship to a patient). One of the purposes was to test the theory through art, not necessarily to illuminate art through the theory.[6] Fuller concurs that Freud's appreciation of art was heuristic and not aesthetic. Commenting on Freud's collection of artifacts Fuller writes, "here again it was the subject matter of a piece, above everything else, which interested him."[7]

---

[4]Freud in Fuller, p. 36.

[5]Ricoeur, p. 164.

[6]Ibid., p. 163.

[7]Fuller, p. 36.

While Ricoeur concludes that it is possible to determine Freud's aesthetic position,[8] Fuller entertains the opposite conclusion:[9]

> Contrary to the popular conception of the 'Freudian' theory of art, Freud himself often asserted that aesthetic experience and such pleasures as those which are to be derived from contemplation of plastic form were **not** susceptible to psychoanalytic inquiry.[10]

Fuller's comment is supported by Freud's statements such as, psychoanalysis, "can do nothing towards elucidating the nature of the artistic gift, nor can it explain the means by which the artist works,"[11] or "where the artist gets his ability to create is no concern of psychology" [12] and, finally, "before the problem of the poet, psychoanalysis must lay down its arms."[13] However, Freud continued to pursue investigations into art and to apply psychoanalytic methods to the interpretation of art (pathography). Most significantly, in Civilization and its Discontents (1930), when writing about sublimation, Freud states:

---

[8]Ricoeur claims that the "fragmentary" nature of Freud's comments seems to obscure but actually clarifies "the exact place of aesthetics in that great design." (Ricoeur, p. 163.) The details of this argument are presented in Chapter Three.

[9]Fuller suggests that because art was outside the realm of Freud's understanding he deemed it outside the realm of (psychoanalytic) understanding.

[10]Fuller, p. 37.

[11]Freud in Fuller, ibid.

[12]Freud in "The Claims of Psycho-analysis to Scientific Interest," 1913, in Spector, p. 79.

[13]Freud in "Dostoevsky and Parricide," 1928, ibid.

> A satisfaction of this kind, such as an artist's joy in creating, in giving his phantasies body ... has a special quality which we shall certainly one day be able to characterize in metapsychological terms.[14]

It has been argued that Freud's self-proclaimed limitations in appreciating art are apparent in his aesthetic speculations, which some writers regard as flawed. Kris and Ernst Freud, Freud's artist son, consider Freud's aesthetic sensibility to be so minimal as to render his comments on the subject worthless.[15] Jones values Freud's views "whether strictly aesthetic or not."[16] He suggests Freud could appreciate poetry, sculpture and architecture; less so painting and music.

Freud's aesthetics is reflected in his self-criticism of The Interpretation of Dreams; "I am scarcely wrong in regarding this lack of form as a sign of an incomplete mastery of the material."[17] Freud's aesthetics is linked to a nineteenth century romantic ideal as reflected in this next quote:

> Somewhere hidden within me I too have some fragmentary sense of form, some

---

[14]Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, p. 16.

[15]Fuller, p. 36.

[16]Ernest Jones in Fuller, p. 36.

[17]Freud to Fliess (1899), in Editor's Introduction to The Interpretation of Dreams, p. xx.

> appreciation of beauty as a species of perfection.[18]

Some writers (Fuller, Spector, Storr, Trilling) have suggested that Freud was ambivalent regarding art and culture. Freud was intrigued by art and the artist throughout his life but it seems that his comments were not always favorable. He wrote admiringly about the artist, suggesting that his unfathomable gifts are beyond explanation and then admonished his infantilism and 'hyper-sexuality'.

> I think there is a general enmity between artists and those engaged in the details of scientific work. We know that they possess in their art a master key to open with ease all female hearts.[19, 20]

Freud once wrote that artists were "people who have no occasion to submit their inner life to the strict control of reason,"[21] a tendency shared by all but more pronounced in artists. After having seen a modern portrait of Karl Abraham, a supporter of modern art, Freud writes to him:

> Knowing what an excellent person you are, I was all the more shocked that

---

[18] Ibid.

[19] Freud in Spector, p. 33.

[20] Spector suggests that Freud's ambivalence is a result of his insecurity regarding artists whom he viewed with the mixed emotions of admiration and envy. Apparently, Freud was threatened by, his wife, Martha's artist friends and relatives, with whom he felt he had to compete for her affections.

[21] Freud in Spector, p. 33.

> such a trivial weakness of character as your tolerance or sympathy for modern "art" should be so horribly punished (as in the portrait). I hear ... that the artist explained that he sees you this way! That sort of person should be the last ones to have access to analytic circles, for they are quite unwished-for illustrations of Adler's statement that precisely those with congenital defects in their eyesight become painters and draughtsmen.[22]

Reflecting similar disdain for modern art Freud wrote to Oskar Pfister (1920):

> Commenting on the latter's book about Expressionist artists (1923), Freud ironically pretended to admire his follower's patience and fairness in writing such a book, which explains "clearly and exhaustively why these people lack the right to claim the name of artist." Freud himself admitted that he is "dreadfully intolerant of fools, sees only the harmful side of them," and refuses to treat seriously such "'artists.'"[23]

According to Anthony Storr Freud's attitude towards artists alternates between, "denigration to adulation with few connecting links between these points of view"[24] He contrasts the following passages:

> An artist is once more in rudiments an introvert, not far removed from neurosis. He is oppressed by excessively powerful instinctual needs. He desires to win honor, power, wealth,

---

[22]Freud in Spector, p. 25.

[23]Ibid., p. 162.

[24]Anthony Storr, The Dynamics of Creation, p. 18.

> fame and the love of women; but he lacks the means for achieving these satisfactions. Consequently, like any other unsatisfied man, he turns away from reality and transfers all his interest, and his libido too, to the wishful constructions of his life of phantasy, whence the path might lead to neurosis.[25]
>
> With,
>
> But creative writers are valuable allies and their evidence is to be praised highly, for they are apt to know a whole host of things between heaven and earth of which our philosophy has not yet let us dream. In their knowledge of the mind they are far in advance of us everyday people, for they draw upon sources which we have not yet opened up for science.[26]

Storr finds these passages to be discrepant and as we shall see in our examination of Freud's theory of sublimation in Chapter Two the ideas expressed by Freud on art have often been interpreted negatively. However, it can be argued that passages taken out of context can easily appear contradictory, especially in Freud, who wrote profusely and whose views were complex and developed over a long period.

Freud's writings on art seem to lend themselves to multiple readings and have been subjected to much criticism. Some of these critiques will be considered at the end if Chapter Two after Freud's theories of art have been outlined.

---

[25]Freud in Storr, p. 16

[26]Freud in Storr, p. 18.

CHAPTER TWO

FREUD'S THEORIES OF ART

This chapter reviews Freud's theories of art, which centre around the concept of sublimation. The remainder of the chapter presents some comments and criticisms on the theory of sublimation.

Freud's appreciation of art may have been limited but his interest in it was profound. He studied art, not with the intention of explaining it, but in order to learn from it. Freud attempted to bypass the seemingly unanswerable questions of aesthetics but contributed many insights into the nature of art, nonetheless. He concentrated on his personal reactions to art, analyzing his own aesthetic responses to increase his awareness of repressed material. Freud's love of art and constant return to it was part of his "search for himself."[1] This search culminated in psychoanalysis, and, among other things, generated ideas about art.

Sublimation

In A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis (1917) Freud gave the impression that he regarded the artist as almost

---

[1]Spector, p. 80.

neurotic: "The artist has also an introverted disposition and has not far to go to become neurotic."[2] He is compelled by his "too clamorous"[3] instincts to seek fame, fortune, honor, power and the love of women but is unable to achieve these. Because of his failure, the artist "turns away from reality"[4] and expresses these predominantly sexual wishes in fantasy. Following these ideas, it has been suggested that the artist's neurosis could be identified in his art.[5] This is the basis of pathography and diagnostic, projective art techniques.

In describing the artist as "near-neurotic"[6] Freud is not suggesting that all artists are neurotic but is referring to the capacity of art to tap the **same** fantasy material that overwhelms the neurotic, but which is **transformed** in the hands of the artist. (And of course, according to Freud the average man is neurotic, regardless of any artistic predisposition.) An artist is **potentially** more neurotic because he is more aware or closer to the content of his unconscious due to a "flexibility of repression",[7] but he

---

[2]Sigmund Freud, Introduction to Psychanalysis, p. 384.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Spector, p. 77.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Freud, op cit, p. 384.

also has the means with which to deal with his extra impulses. That is, he can sublimate.

Although the artist turns to his fantasy, and, "has not far to go to become neurotic," he finds his way back to reality through art-making:

> The way back to reality is found by the artist thus: ... First of all he understands how to elaborate his day-dreams, so that they lose that personal note which grates upon strange ears and become enjoyable to others; he knows too how to modify them sufficiently so that their origin in prohibited sources is not easily detected. Further, he possesses the mysterious ability to mould his particular material until it expresses the ideas of his phantasy faithfully; and then he knows how to attach to this reflection of his phantasy-life so strong a stream of pleasure that, for a time at least, the repressions are out-balanced and dispelled by it.[8]

Thus, the artist is endowed with an aesthetic ability that distinguishes him from the neurotic. This aesthetic 'understanding' and "mysterious ability" to "elaborate" and "mould his particular material"[9] enables him to sublimate. According to Freud, through sublimation, the artist not only expresses (thereby relieving his own tension) unconscious "prohibited" fantasies, but "opens out to others the way

---

[8] Ibid., p. 385.

[9] Ibid.

back to the comfort and consolation of their own unconscious sources of pleasure"[10] through their viewing of the art.

Because artists do not easily renounce their sexual desire and are endowed with special technical gifts, they are able to transform the sexual fantasy material into culturally acceptable and appreciated expressions. The good artist blends reality with his neurotic wishes thereby sublimating his sexual fantasy in the art work. The unsuccessful artist, daydreamer or neurotic lacks the objective and technical skill necessary to successfully sublimate. As a result, his work is less palatable; it is contaminated by an overdose of fantasy (or a lack of objectivity). The viewer finds his creations distasteful because the sexual material remains exposed.

Thus, for Freud, the sublimating artist achieves a balance between reality and fantasy and is not escaping into neurotic fantasy. Even in Freud's earliest speculations (in a letter to Fliess in 1897), when he discovered that there exists a similar mechanism in creative writing and hysterical phantasies, he contended that an objective element accompanied the part related to an emotional

---

[10]Ibid.

disturbance in the successful artist.[11] The artist shares with the neurotic access to fantasy material but the former is able to add a reality component which enables him to sublimate the material in a healthy way. Fantasy does not lead to a "turning aside from reality"[12] for the artist as it does for the neurotic.[13]

Thus, in the 'bad' artist Freud finds a neurotic failing to deal with reality; in the 'good' artist he finds a genius beyond comprehension: This characterization of the genius artist may derive from a bourgeois Victorian perspective. The 'good' artist is modeled after the Renaissance man: Romantic, Bohemian, rebellious and free, he is "a being of a special kind, exalted, autocratic, villainous, and at times rather incomprehensible."[14] Similarly, when Freud mentions aesthetics, he is referring to the 19th century notion that, "The science of aesthetics investigates the conditions under which things are felt as beautiful."[15]

---

[11] Spector, p. 77.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Other writers have picked up on Freud's differentiation between healthy and neurotic art. Jones writes that analysts have worked with both "neurotic" and "genuine" artists, curing the neurotically motivated and inspiring the truly talented. Storr questions this, suggesting that it is not so apparent at times which is which. Storr, p. 19.

[14] Freud from a letter to painter Hermann Struck in Spector, p. 78.

[15] Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, p. 19.

In keeping with both the 19th century attitude and the psychoanalytic model, Freud concludes that beauty must be a sophisticated perceptual representation of a libidinal cathexis. To the culturally-determined attitude in which aesthetics is based on beauty Freud adds a psychoanalytic element; beauty is based on libido. Thus, the viewer's and artist's appreciation of beauty in art is actually based on **the unconscious perception of sublimated sexual material** and concomitant gratification of the sexual instinct: The sublimating artist and viewer may be consciously aware of their attraction to and perception of 'beauty' while consciously unaware of its sexual origin.

Freud considered this sexual essence of art to be present in the form and content. In the following quote, he suggests that the artist's interest in form is an attempt to discharge sexual tension according to the pleasure principle:

> Meaning is but little to these men [artists]; all they care for is line, shape, agreement of contours. They are given up to the **Lustprinzip.** [16]

And years later,

> But their intensity [of artistic satisfactions] is mild compared with that derived from the sating of crude and primary instinctual impulses.[17]

---

[16]Freud from a letter to Jones (1914) in Fuller, p. 37.

[17]Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, p. 16.

Thus, the artist's formal concerns are a function of the pleasure principle but it is understood that artistic sublimation is an advanced and complex form of instinctual gratification.

As part of the theory of sublimation, Freud suggests a second libidinal-based function of form: It allows the artist to 'bribe' and 'seduce' the viewer into accepting his egotistic daydreams. The appeal of the form and technique are used by the artist for their ability to help him disguise his wish in the art and to attract the viewer to it so that neither himself nor his wish will be rejected. Thus the fame and fortune he desires but cannot achieve any other way is secured. On the one hand this account seems to suggest that the artist is manipulative and that aesthetics is the tool of manipulation. On the other hand, since the viewer shares the same sexual instincts as the artist, he aesthetically appreciates and values art because it corresponds to his own psychic material. The artist presents the opportunity for this process.

According to Spector, in the form as bribery model art not only conceals the original libidinal impulses but offers an aesthetic appeal in compensation for the otherwise offensive

nature of the unconscious material being expressed.[18] The existence of offensive material and the need for censorship is an important part of the theory of psychoanalysis which hypothesizes a conflict between our primitive urges and our conscious beliefs resulting in resistance and the need to repress (causing tension) or express (producing relief). The theory of sublimation follows these economic principles. However, as Freud notes at the end of the quote on page 18, aesthetic appeal may not be so much a matter of compensation for distasteful material as a factor in the loosening of repression: That is, the aesthetic pleasure afforded by the art process results in tension release which loosens repression allowing access to fantasy material.

This same quote, on which this section has been based, taken from pages 384-85 in the 23rd lecture in A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, has been widely misread. Since some of the resulting criticisms will be reviewed it is interesting to compare the quote to a passage in "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," (1911) which states the same concepts in a more complimentary and less-often cited version.

> Art brings about a reconciliation between the two principles [pleasure and reality] in a peculiar way. An artist is originally a man who turns away from

[18] Spector suggests that Freud's "proper Victorian distaste for the genital side of sex contributed to his view of art as a refinement upon sexual origins." Spector, p. 102.

> reality because he cannot come to terms with the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction which it at first demands, and who allows his erotic and ambitious wishes full play in the life of phantasy. He finds the way back to reality, however, from this world of phantasy by making use of special gifts to mould his phantasies into truth of a new kind, which are valued by men as precious reflections of reality. Thus in a certain fashion he actually becomes the hero, the king, the creator, or the favorite he desired to be, without following the long roundabout path of making real alterations in the external world. But he can only achieve this because other men feel the same dissatisfaction as he does with the renunciation demanded by reality, and because that dissatisfaction, which results form the replacement of the pleasure principle by the reality principle, is itself a part of reality.[19]

This quote suggests the extent to which Freud values art. It also shows that he did not advocate an aesthetics based solely on either fantasy/id/unconscious or reality/ego/conscious. His theory of sublimation proposes the blending of these elements through the artist's special gifts including the artist's objective ability to perceive a reality common to men and his technical ability to give it form.

According to Spitz, in Freud's account aesthetic experience is afforded through, "identification with the general

---

[19]Freud in Spitz, p. 13.

process of circumventing renunciation, of outwitting the censor by gratifying wishes in fantasy." [20] These wishes constitute the content of the art work but without the aesthetic element of form the content would remain unconscious and could not be brought into reality. That is, it could not be communicated. The form is the bridge between pleasure and reality.

However, the Freudian explanation of form does not just refer to technical gifts and objective perceptual skills; nor is form based solely on reality, as Spitz suggests. Freud considers the formal choices an artist makes to be based on content. That is, the artist makes aesthetic choices based on historical content so that, "form is the precipitate of an older content."[21] In this way, the meaning of a work of art and the fantasies from which they derive are not only embedded in and communicated through the subject matter, but through the form.

Some psychoanalysts have considered art-making to spring from the experience at the breast. From this vantage point Otto Rank reconsiders the problem of form:

> All 'form' goes back to the primal form of the maternal vessel, which has become to a large extent the content of art;

---

[20] Ibid., p. 14.

[21] Freud to the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society (1909) in Spector, p. 84.

> and indeed in an idealized and sublimated way, viz., as form, which makes the primal form, fallen under repression, again acceptable, in that it can be represented and felt as 'beautiful.'[22]

Rank's suggestion represents the traditional Freudian position with the onus on form as content (the breast instead of the more general oedipal conflict), and sublimation of, instead of the pure unconscious instinctual urges themselves, the relationship to the object (breast) onto which these drives were originally cathected.

In the Freudian account, the fantasy content which inspires the form and subject of the art work is based on memory. The artist is inspired by his memory to which he has greater access than the average man, thanks to the "flexibility of repression"[23] mentioned earlier that is partly a result of his nature ("too clamorous" instincts) and his aesthetic ability (the pleasure from which relieves tension and loosens repression). Thus, what appears to be the fantasy or illusion of the artist is actually truth since "there is a truth to the wish, a motivational truth, which can be

---

[22]Rank in Spector, p. 135.

[23]Freud, Introduction to Psychoanalysis, p. 384.

realized in various forms of art."[24] Behind the apparent illusion lies hidden and repressed "historical truth."[25]

An example of how truth and illusion are combined can be found in Freud's hypothesis of therapeutic remembering in which the art work is a combination of early remembered experience and objective perceptions in the present. The artist (and spectator through the artist's work) is still in touch with his childhood experience, which normally surfaces only in dreams and neurosis, and re-expresses these in the art.[26] This world of childhood is replete with all the burden and guilt of the Oedipal drama, which, regardless of the apparent theme of the art work, is the real topic. **The fantasy material is derived from actual events but these are only remembered in the unconscious and repeated symbolically in the art work.**

This idea, which Freud originally developed with Breuer (1895) emphasizes the therapeutic aspect of remembering. According to Spector, the theory has its roots in the Platonic Reminiscence Theory: Remembering renders the object more perfect than in its actual existence since it is

---

[24]Spector, p. 81.

[25]Freud in Spector, ibid.

[26]Ibid., p. 83.

based on how we once knew the object in previous existence. The aesthetic experience is pleasurable precisely because, as derived from Aristotle, there is joy in recognition.[27] Art is valuable because it facilitates such unconscious remembering, which, due to repression, is rare. However, to fully appreciate the role of repression in art-making, we must examine Freud's conception of the functioning of the psyche.

Freud's model of the psyche is founded on the dynamics of repression and his discovery of the manifestation of unconscious material in dreams. Freud suggested that psychoanalysis "provides information about the creative process"[28] but, because art-making is predominantly an unconscious process, to explain it would require an understanding of the unknowable.[29] However, this idea of an absolute and unknowable realm outside of the world of appearance and sensation was modified somewhat by Freud: He originally resolved the problem of the ideal verses the real by postulating two unconscious realms; the deepest, the primary process, numinal in the Kantian sense, is completely unknowable while the other, the secondary process, is

---

[27]Ibid., p. 84.

[28]Freud to the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in (1907) in Spector, p. 87.

[29]This conception of a completely obscure unconscious can be traced back to Kant through Hegel and Schopenhauer as articulated in Eduard von Hartmann's Philosophy of the Unconscious (1867).

preconscious and knowable since it is manifested in the outer world, phenomenal in the Kantian sense.

Both processes are guided, according to the pleasure principle, towards wish fulfillment and maintenance of the ego's constant energy charge (which Freud called 'cathexis'). While preconscious wish fulfillment is progressive, moving from memory to motor response, unconscious wish fulfillment is regressive, as in dreams, since it harkens back to infantile satisfactions and recreates early hallucinatory perception. Dynamic conflicts arise because the infantile wishes are often contrary to conscious ethical and aesthetic values[30] and are therefore rejected or 'repressed'. The artist's special ability provides him with the means to move from regression to progression more easily so that he is less compelled to repress his wishes. This is possible because art has the potential to satisfy both ends of the conflicting demands: It fulfills the requirements of the reality principle by producing valuable, aesthetically pleasing objects while at the same time expressing and gratifying the infantile wishes of the pleasure principle. This is the reconciliation to which Freud refers in the quote on page 23.

---

[30]Spector, p. 88.

The importance of the unconscious in art-making is apparent in Freud's statement that: "We are probably much too inclined to overestimate the conscious character even of intellectual and artistic production."[31] Freud uses his concept of repression and his hypothesis of the two unconscious processes to suggest a method for knowing the seemingly unknowable as it is manifested in dreams. The 'numinal' content of dreams, what Freud called the "latent dream thoughts" are first subjected to "dream censorship" and then to "secondary revision."[32] The result is that the manifested material is distorted and disguised. What is expressed in dreams and art are the manifestations of the latent thoughts. As mentioned, the real meaning is hidden and resisted because its sexual and aggressive nature offends us.

The process of repression through censorship, distortion or disguise is called the 'dream work' which functions according to certain principles and can be unraveled through interpretation to expose the unconscious motive of the dream. According to Freud, "One can reconstruct from a single remaining fragment ... all the dream-thoughts."[33]

---

[31]Freud in Spector, p. 87.

[32]Freud, Interpretation of Dreams, p. 514.

[33]Ibid., p. 517.

Dream analysis involves identifying and interpreting the condensation, displacement and symbolization of dream elements and determining their pictorial representability, that is interpreting the meaning behind:

> their ambiguity: should they be taken in a positive or negative sense; historically, as recollection; symbolically; or in terms of their wording?[34]

The relationship of the principles of dream interpretation to art is uncertain. In some cases Freud analyzed the contents of art using the principles of dream work[35] but he did not equate art and dreams.[36] For example, according to Freud dreams are arranged like a puzzle while artistic composition is rational.[37] Symbolism in dreams is determined by "paths which it finds already laid down in the unconscious," according to Freud.[38] Freudian symbols, then, are pre-determined by the experience of the dreamer. They represent secret, usually sexual, ideas about self, family, birth, love and death and can be found in psychoneuroses, legends, myths and jokes. Symbols in dreams can be traced back to a 'cause' in the same manner as a symptom. Can the

---

[34] Spector, p. 90.

[35] Ibid., p. 89.

[36] Ibid., p. 93.

[37] Ibid., p. 88.

[38] Ibid., p. 93.

symbol in art be similarly traced to a cause and treated as a symptom? Is the cause of the symbol-symptom the meaning of the art?

Critique

Formalist aestheticians are not alone in their understanding of Freud's writing as suggesting that the art symbol is as fixed as the dream symbol and is therefore equivalent to a symptom: Some psychoanalytic writers argue that symbols are fixed and that therefore art is essentially **re-creation** while others postulate that the aesthetic process allows something **new** to be created. Storr charges that Freud's theory of sublimation does not distinguish "between a work of art and a neurotic symptom."[39]

Freud does not consider the distinction between symptom and non-symptom to be clear. He postulates a "fluctuating frontier between normal and pathological states of mind" and suggests that "there is a grain of truth concealed in every delusion."[40] Nevertheless, he submits a differentiating criteria: Dream symbols and neurotic symptoms are narcissistic while sublimated art is not; it is objective and non-egocentric.

---

[39]Storr, p. 18.

[40]Spector, p. 49.

All symbols (in dreams and art) spring from the same source; the mechanisms of dream-work which is the psychically-determined, unoriginal use of the latent material. However, this is not the only factors involved in the creation of art, according to Freud. The non-egocentric artist has the ability to add an element which separates it from dream and neurosis and gives it the status of art -an aesthetic element and ability which Freud felt to be outside the capacity of psychoanalysis to explain.[41]

> For Freud, the dream-work belongs together with neurosis, the psychopathology of everyday life, and the pathology of genius rather than in aesthetics as an explanation of the creative process.[42]

Thus, the mechanisms of the dream-work can be found in art but does not account completely for aesthetics, as Freud understood it. Art is not, as Freud's critics feared, the sum of psychically-determined displacements and condensations (although it also contains these elements) because of the artist's aesthetic ability or the objective element that he uses to transform the psychodetermined material.

---

[41] Ibid., p. 94.

[42] Ibid., p. 92.

For Freud, art and dreams are not analogous but both are derived from mostly sexual fantasy material, an assertion which many critics have also disputed. Freud does not always discover direct links to sex in symbolic content but it figures prominently in his theory of the processes of art creation and appreciation.

As mentioned earlier, Freud connected the perception of beauty with sexual excitation. However, Spector believes that Freud was not suggesting a simple and direct link between art and sex even though such materialist reductions were popular in the nineteenth century: Sublimation includes biological and cultural elements. "Sexual feeling" is transferred onto art objects, becoming "the love of beauty."[43] In this model, symbols are the vehicle through which sublimation does its work. While the unconscious motive is sexual and would consequently, in its pure form, be divisive of men - "Sexual need does not unite men; it separates them"[44] - in sublimated art, the repressed material is transformed through symbolism into socially acceptable and useful products.

---

[43]Freud in Three Essays (1905) in Spector, p. 100.

[44]Freud in Totem and Taboo (1913) in Spector, p. 101.

The artist's need to sublimate, to culturally transform his libidinal impulses into socially acceptable products through symbolization, is condoned by society which elaborates myths to account for the artist's behavior (Kris and Kurz, 1979). Society is rewarded by sharing in some of the artist's gratification as spectators of the process. According to Freud, the artist's gratification is twofold; through sublimation and therefore appeasement of his strong desires and through 'real' success as a professional artist.

Freud put forth the theory of sublimation as a psychoanalytic explanation of art, not as an aesthetic theory. Yet it has nonetheless been the subject of criticism from aestheticians. The term sublimation refers to the making of base things **sublime**: However, Freud believes that it is the instincts that are made to appear to be sublime through art while some of his critics prefer to link the sublime exclusively to an aesthetics transcendent of instincts. Freud's critics are unsympathetic to the theory of sublimation which they understood as debasement of art with its reduction of aesthetics to a formula for relieving tension and circumventing neurosis through the release of sexual tension. These critics profess that the theory of sublimation is simply unnecessary to an

understanding of art (Lawrence Kubie, 1958).[45]

While formalists consider the value of a art to be determined by its formal, aesthetic qualities, Freud suggests that the value of art lies in its ability to manifest unconscious fantasy. The artist can communicate these fantasies due to his ability to regress, contacting his own fantasy and then progress, making them accessible and universal through art. Freud emphasizes the importance of winning "honor, power, and the love of women" **through** fantasy but **in** reality. According to formalists, these goals and gains are external and dependant on the individual artist's personality and do not bear on the aesthetic merit of the art work. This criticism reflects the formalists' literal reading of Freud; that is, they equate Freud's attempt to identify the unconscious motivations of the artist as an exposition of the artist's conscious incentives.

Arthur Koestler suggests that Freudian sublimation is really **substitution** since goal-inhibited sexuality is replaced by cultural equivalents to coitus.[46] Ernest Schachtel opposes Freud's theories because of their accentuation of repressed

---

[45]Ibid., p. 104.

[46]Ibid., p. 104.

drives and regression as the origin of creativity. He contends that art is much more than the result of overly demanding impulses and loosened repression: He prefers to credit the artist with "openness toward the world"[47] instead of regressive mobility. The pursuit of secondary gains (fame, fortune) highlighted by Freud do not fit Schachtel's portrait of the artist as "candid, honest, and open."[48] He distinguishes the free thinking and wandering outside of conventional rules in creativity from daydreaming. Schachtel believes tension release is an apt explanation of daydreaming but not of creativity since the wandering is not random; it is due to the artist's open attitude and is focused on an object.

Spector also voices reservations about Freud's version of sublimation. He charges that Freud's emphasis on sublimation with aesthetics as bait results in his overlooking other aspects of art-making such as the potential therapeutic benefit of catharsis. However, the theory of sublimation is actually a development of the earlier theory of catharsis. Freud's work with Breuer postulated a therapeutic effect from the release of pent-up emotions and repressed memories. Breuer's physical, direct

---

[47]Ibid., p. 109.

[48]Ibid.

approach involved hypnosis which Freud eventually abandoned, considering it to offer only temporary relief. He came to prefer the 'sublimated' approach which emphasized self-knowledge and self-control.

Freud was skeptical of a theory of art based on pleasure from discharge. **In his theory of sublimation, it is the transformation, as opposed to an unformed expression, of unconscious instinctual material that is cathartic.** Catharsis functions as a kind of "safety valve for humanity's over-repressed instincts."[49] After describing the process in economic terms Freud states, "Here we have one of the origins of artistic activity."[50] The idea of a "useful outlet" refers to ethical considerations: A sublimation (such as an artist's painting of murderous feelings) is useful in that it changes what could be neurotic energy into positive activity, while an acting-out (such as committing murder) discharges energy but is non-useful in terms of adapting to the reality principle.

Spector suggests his own solution to a psychoanalytic aesthetics based on Freud's theories of jokes which, according to him, bear on "the relation of play to sex in

---

[49]Ibid., p. 103.

[50]Freud from Three Essays, in Spector, ibid.

art, of play to reality, and of the spectator to the artist." [51]

> Another solution to the question of the means used by the artist to reach the spectator was developed by Freud in his generally neglected theory of "ideational mimetics" which I regard as potentially his most valuable contribution to aesthetics, and the best bridge leading from his psychoanalytic view on art to the general field of aesthetic appreciation.[52]

Ideational mimetics, as it literally implies, has to do with the communicator mimicking a characteristic of the idea communicated. A concrete example is the story-teller who opens his eyes wide while describing something large. The amount of energy of the thing described is thereby reflected in the amount of energy necessary to describe it. The original physical thing is translated into like psychical properties. This idea is perceived by the viewer who recognizes the original physical thing through the similarities in the idea of it without having to actually imitate it in his muscles. He can compare it to his memories (ideas) of similar movements.[53]

Freud uses this theory to suggest an explanation of the comic. Normally ideational mimetics conserves energy; that

---

[51] Ibid., p. 113.

[52] Ibid., p. 119.

[53] Ibid., p. 120.

is, thinking of the idea efficiently represents a thing without using all the energy actually in the thing. In comic situations a superfluity or a paucity of energy has been used to communicate the idea of the thing.[54] This incongruity is experienced as funny: Freud explains the resultant laughter neurophysiologically as the attempt to discharge the extra tension and thereby maintain a balance of energy.

> Freud's "aesthetics," failing to work out the connections among artist, spectator, and work of art, has little to say about the key areas of perception and emotion in art. In his theory of ideational mimetics and the associated theory of **Einfühlung**, Freud made hesitant steps that might have filled in the gaps of his perception theory.[55]

Ideational mimetics in art works thus: The viewer understands the communicator through identification based on **empathy** (**Einfühlung** or feeling-in) - that is, through correlation with his own experience. Spector elucidates this aspect in relation to visual art with the full knowledge that this course was not chosen by Freud. Spector points out, for example, that the role of **Einfühlung** was suggested a few times but not articulated explicitly. Spector considers the direction Freud took with the concept of ideational mimetics (looking for the childhood origins of

---

[54] Ibid., p. 122.

[55] Ibid., p. 123

the memories) digressive. Art as ideational mimetics fulfills Freud's economic criteria and explains form as the physical expression of psychic content.

Freud was skeptical about this explanation[56] because 'empathy', 'mimetics', 'association', and 'imitation' suggest projective identification. According to Freud, individuals come to share experiences and values through projective identification which is closely allied to the theory of empathy. He was aware of the work of other writers who claimed that one "projects oneself into nature through symbols" but considered this to be an inadequate account of aesthetics.[57] Like catharsis, empathy and ideational mimetics can only be part of the larger sublimation theory.

Most importantly, projective identification is inadequate as an aesthetic theory because it is associated with psychopathology in that it is used as a primitive defense mechanism. Freud did mention that the poet might be using a similar mechanism when he projects aspects of himself

---

[56]Freud's understanding of **Einfühlung's** relation to art was based on Lipps (1897) who suggested that the spectator empathizes with the art object. He is able to appreciate it through a process of analogy in which the characteristics of the art work correspond to matching qualities in his own experience. Aesthetic empathy then is the result of "inner imitation." (Spector, p. 124) The criticism raised against this "associative method" charges that it is overly dependant on past events. For example, Groos (1898) doubts whether "mere echoes of the past" (ibid) are a sufficient catalyst for powerful aesthetic experience.

[57]Spector on Vischer, p. 134.

(aggression, for example) onto his characters and images; however, he was referring to a clinical syndrome in which the individual fully perceives his own projection as a real dimension of the other (as in paranoid hallucinations or belief in demons). Therefore, if an artist was creating through projective identification he would not be sublimating; his work would fail to communicate or be of interest to others due to its "magical" quality.[58] [59]

While Freud alluded to the role of empathy in art he mainly concentrated on discovering hidden meaning and not, like the proponents of **Einfühlung**, explaining how the form is understood empathically through aesthetic imitation and contemplation. To Freud, the empathic response of the viewer and the role of form in conveying the meaning had a deeper explanation; instinctual sublimation. According to Spector, the Freudian analyst's claim to have probed the "deepest" level of the art seems difficult to reconcile with the artist's contention that "surface and depth in art are fused."[60] [61] However, it seems to me that this is addressed

---

[58] Ibid, p. 134.

[59] As Freud feared, and much to the dislike of Spector, the 20th century application of the empathy theory postulates that any communal experience qualifies as art. There is no distinction between 'pure' or 'psychopathological' nor any hierarchical aesthetic criteria. In the extreme, chimpanzee art sells in galleries and a Dadaist perspective proclaims that all men are artists and that a snow man is as artistically valid as Michelangelo's Moses. Spector, p. 125.

[60] Ibid., p. 140.

[61] Post-structural theory addresses this topic.

by Freud's assertion that art is a reconciliation of the two principles. That is, art 'works' both consciously and unconsciously.

Freud's method of pathography is an application of the method of interpreting dreams through free association in order to discover the deeper truth disguised in the symbols. Through pathography Freud endeavored to reveal the past events which were concealed in the art symbols. For example, the merging of the two figures in Leonardo's Virgin and St. Anne, described by Freud as "badly condensed dream images"[62], has a "secret meaning". The deliberate departure from convention is understood by Freud as also expressing unconscious material. In this case Freud relates the formal anomaly to Leonardo's confusion regarding the two mothers of his past.

The disparity between readings of the Freudian concept of form is made evident by a comparison of Spitz (1985) and Rose (1980). According to Spitz' interpretation, "Freud hints that form and content work hand in hand," and through form the viewer is "liberated" and "empowered" to contact inner reality.[63] In contrast, Rose, considers "Freud's

[62]Freud in Spector, p. 125.

[63]Spitz, p. 15.

distinction between form and content to be convenient but artificial."[64] Citing the same essay as Spitz (Freud "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," 1908) he concludes,

> Freud reduced form and beauty to resistance and defense. ... Form sugarcoats an offensive content, bribing the critical powers with aesthetic pleasure (analogous to sexual forepleasure) and detouring the normal sexual aim into voyeurism or exhibitionism (as in a perversion).[65]

Citing Greene (1980-81) Spitz claims that current psychoanalytic aesthetics reflects an open view of the overlap between form and content while Rose charges that, while art has not suffered from this idiosyncratic view of form (as an "oedipal key"[66]), psychoanalysis has erroneously adhered to an definition of form derived from Freud's personal taste. Rose believes that psychoanalysts still think of form as "letting through" the repressed wishes.[67]

Spector contributes an interesting analysis of Freud's theory of sublimation. He suggests that the dualistic model of a unifying, balanced ego on the one hand, with the chaotic energies of unconscious, superego and reality forces on the other, corresponds to two different aesthetic

---

[64]Gilbert J. Rose in The Power of Form: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Aesthetic Form, p. 7.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Ibid., p. 8.

[67]Holland in Rose, Ibid.

traditions and represents an attempt to reconcile them. In the former, the neoclassical emphasis on beauty through order is evident while the latter component incorporates the romantic tradition with the accent on originality and individual expression. The theory serves to **legitimize** (through ego control) **fantasy** (which is otherwise too archaic). For Spector, Freud's contributions to art theory include:

> his powerful literary example in the great works such as The Interpretation of Dreams and The Psychopathology of Everyday Life; ... such ideas as overdetermination and condensation; his intimate description of the continuity between normal and neurotic experience; and his dramatic view of the mind in ... a war, not of good and evil, but of ego, superego, and id. ... That Freud chose to emphasize the content of art, and the wish-fulfillment aspect of fantastic mental processes, does not mean that students building on Freud's insights cannot bridge the gaps toward the formal, perceptual aspects of art [since] ... some of these theories do have a direct bearing on, and can elucidate recent styles in, art and literature.[68]

Freud highlights the artist's abilities and the value of art but adheres to a theory of sublimation that emphasizes the transformation of instincts insisting that it is doubtful whether "we are in a position to undertake **anything** without

---

[68]Spector, p. 145.

having an intention in view."[69] This does not mean that the artist's work is to be "put upon the same level as a masturbatory phantasy"[70] as Storr charges. Freud maintains that art is "not merely illusion or sublimation of sex,"[71] the reason having to do with the artist's aesthetic and objective abilities which enable him to cope with reality while expressing his fantasy in an ingenious way. According to Spector, "Freud sees art emerging when we allow our "mental apparatus" to "work in the direction of pleasure,""[72] according to the aesthetic element that Freud had difficulty describing. Freud did not equate art with neurosis or perversion[73], nor did he neglect the importance of an aesthetic element. Instead, he sought within the art work the element that links all experience - the unconscious.

---

[69]Freud in Spector, p. 116.

[70]Storr, p. 17.

[71]Ibid., p. 110.

[72]Spector quoting Freud in Spector, p. 117.

[73]Nevertheless, Spector finds fault in the Darwinian conception of beauty in art as a parallel with display to attract a mate. Through art, the "same unconscious wishful impulses" are gratified through the artist's display and the spectator's looking; that is, they are equated with the forepleasure of sexual play. But, according to Spector, the model needs to be clarified: It seems close to perversion which Freud defined as the replacement of the sexual act by its preparatory stage. In other words, looking plays a normal role as forepleasure but is abnormal when it is the sexual act in itself. If men are driven to make and look at art to satisfy sexual cravings then this seems precariously close to perversion. Spector asks, "At which point does the artist's love of exhibiting (art, or rather himself through art) become a perverse substitute for sex?" Spector, p. 104.

Basing themselves on Freud, theorists have offered a wide range of possibilities towards a psychoanalytic aesthetic. For example, Ricoeur (Chapter Three) considers both the id and the ego to play a role in art-making while, for Winnicott (Chapter Four), art is a function neither of the id nor of the ego. Some authors have elaborated an id aesthetics while others have postulated an aesthetics of the ego. After having described Freud's theories of art and their criticisms in this chapter, we are prepared to discuss the interpretations, modifications and applications of Freud's ideas made by writers attempting to develop a psychoanalytic aesthetics, in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

TOWARDS A FREUDIAN AESTHETIC

In Chapter Two, it was suggested that Freud's theories of art (catharsis, sublimation), based on pleasure through shaped discharge and "an economy of psychic expenditure,"[1] are susceptible to a formalist critique. Spitz suggests that the interests of the aesthetician and the psychoanalyst overlap and that this is in the process of being articulated. The writers presented in this chapter (Gombrich, Kris, Fuller, Ricoeur and others) extend or revise Freud's ideas about art, address some criticisms, and put forth ideas regarding a 'psychoanalytic aesthetic'. The relation of form, content, process, dreams, joke and neurosis to a psychoanalytic understanding of art will be explored in this and the next chapter.

In the literature cited the term "aesthetics" is not clearly defined. It does not seem to refer exclusively to taste or beauty or the sublime as in 19th century philosophy but may refer loosely to art or the creative process in general or to that which is intrinsic to art, such as form or technique. Writers use different parameters to describe the field of aesthetics. Definitions of theoreticians cited in

---

[1] Spector, p. 116.

this paper range from Clive Bell, who maintains that there is a separate "aesthetic emotion" to Peter Fuller who contends that aesthetics is ultimately psychobiological. Freud's position is not clear, since he endeavored to identify the psychological factors in art (for example, through the technique of pathography) while alluding to an aesthetic domain outside of the realm of psychoanalysis.

Spitz

Spitz identifies and rejects the distinctions between psychoanalyst and aesthetician listed below in chart form.[2]

THE PHILOSOPHER'S APPROACH TO AESTHETICS	THE PSYCHOANALYST'S APPROACH TO AESTHETICS
Nature of aesthetic experience	Origin of aesthetic experience
Structural (begins with aesthetic concept, applies it to the art object, describes nature of aesthetic experience, as it is already created or found)	Genesis, history (seeks an explanation of motivations behind the artist's experience and viewer's response)
Products	Processes
Ideas and things	Persons

Chart I: The Philosopher's and Psychoanalyst's Aesthetics

[2]Spitz, p. 2.

Spitz points out that there are philosophers who concentrate on the origin of aesthetic experience (Susanne K. Langer) formerly considered to be the province of the psychoanalyst (Friedman, 1958). Also, analysts have taken a structural approach (Freud, ego-psychologists, Lacanians) and have concerned themselves with both the nature and origin of aesthetic experience (Winnicott).

Philosophers, for their part, have not restricted themselves to describing products. Aestheticians have had to deal with process since one of the features of twentieth century art has been the manipulation of aesthetic distance (in for example, performance art and viewer participant installations), the experiments sometimes resulting in process as product. These factors, along with "the presence of ambiguity" and "multiplicity of meanings"[3] in art, have broadened the overlap between the psychoanalyst's and the aesthetician's endeavors.

> Any philosopher who seeks to understand the art of our time must soon deal with aesthetic qualities that can be seen as isomorphic with the psychoanalytic constructs, such as displacement, distortion, reversal, projection and condensation.[4]

---

[3]Ibid., p. 3.

[4]Ibid.

The inter-relation is unavoidable: Marion Milner (see Chapter Four) has suggested that the evolution of psychoanalytic theory has been, in part, a reaction to recent art movements[5] while Spector[6] and Kris[7] contend that psychoanalysis has, in turn, has had a significant influence on contemporary art.

Spitz (1985) describes Freud's metapsychological theory and clinical method as dynamic, economic, topographic, structural, genetic and adaptive. The method of attending to the unfolding of meanings within interrelated contexts can generate rich insight regarding aesthetic products **and** processes.

In the chart below Spitz delineates three modes of psychoanalytic aesthetics. She charges that in the past the context and boundaries have not been clearly articulated by analysts writing on art. This has resulted in confusion and hostility from other domains. Spitz attempts to identify the "shifting perimeters" and the actual aesthetic problems that applied psychoanalysis has been able to address in a

---

[5]Milner in Fuller, p. 172.

[6]Spector, pp. 146-182.

[7]Ernst Kris, Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art, p. 30.

bid to strengthen the bridge between psychoanalysis and aesthetics.[8]

	PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY	AESTHETIC PROBLEM	CRITICAL MODE
(1) FREUD: Pathography.	Interprets drives and conflicts in artist's life and art work.	The relationship between the artist's life and work; artistic intention and expression.	Romantic criticism.
(2) EGO-PSYCHOLOGY: Art as autonomous, according to its own internal relations.	Art-making as autonomous function of the ego; organized defense and adaptation.	Art sui generis; origin and function of artistic form and individual style.	Objective or New Criticism.
(3) OBJECT RELATIONS THEORY: Work of art plus audience.	Self and other, loss and reparation, fusion and separation, transitional phenomena, early infant transference.	Audience response; the nature and genesis of aesthetic experience.	Phenomenological and reader-response criticism.

Chart II: Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics[9]

While attempts have been made to integrate the three approaches (Otto Kernberg, 1976) Spitz maintains that each has its special applicability, but that there is an interdependence between them as there is between artist, art work, and viewer; and drives, defenses, and objects.[10] Each approach offers an explanation of the therapeutic function

---

[8] Spitz, p. x.

[9] Ibid., pp. x & xi.

[10] Ibid., p. 12.

of art. According to Spitz psychoanalysts have tended to interpret either the "general pathology and/or ego strengths" of the artist.[11]

The proponents of the art as adaptation model equate art with high functioning. When taken to the extreme the art-as-adaptation view suggests that a 'good' (healthy) mental state is related to 'good' art work. There exists a body of literature relating art with psychopathology (Otto Billig, for example) in which the art-making is considered to wane when the patient recovers. This portrayal of art as related to regressed mental states is in part what the advocates of art-as-adaptation have attempted to challenge.

Gombrich

Gombrich adds one major modification to Freud's theory. In his account, form is not just the fancy packaging that entices the viewer. He advocates the application of Freud's model of content and form in the joke to explain their interaction in art. The preconscious idea (content of the joke) briefly enters the unconscious, deriving its form from, "the dream-like condensation of meaning characteristic of ... the primary process."[12] But the aesthetic process

---

[11]Ibid., p. 1.

[12]Gombrich in Spector, p. 117.

does not end here. Gombrich points out that, while Freud elucidated the role of unconscious drives and memories in art, he was also concerned with how art adjusts to reality. In Gombrich's view, **form is the reality component** and it comes first.

> Only those unconscious ideas that can be adjusted to the reality of formal structure become communicable, and their value to others rests at least as much in their formal structure as in the idea.[13]

Gombrich turns the process around and places the emphasis on the form which determines the content that gets communicated according to its capacity to hold the ideas. This appears to contradict Freud's original conception of form as determined by content and derived from its exposure to the primary process. Gombrich claims that the unconscious determination of form corresponds to the libidinal stage of orality while the reality adjustment corresponds to social and cultural factors and that both steps are needed for content to be given the form necessary for communication.

Gombrich notes that Freud generally ignored the specific physical qualities of art, such as the medium used, treating only the psychologically significant content, except with jokes where Freud meticulously ties the meaning and

---

[13]Ibid. p. 118.

understanding of jokes to an analysis of the form as well as the content. Freud wrote in 1914, "My book on jokes gave the first examples of the application of psychoanalytic thinking to aesthetic themes."[14] According to this model Gombrich seeks a psychological basis for **taste** in art based on orality, but warns that, where-as "taste may be accessible to psychological analysis, art is possibly not."[15] According to Gombrich, taste (derived from orality) is just one aspect of art; the other is social context. Form is originally derived from the unconscious while the acceptability of communicated ideas - what ultimately gets expressed through the form - will be determined by the cultural trends.

Gombrich's theory distinguishes between two types of taste[16] allowing for art based on pleasure (tension release) and identification while at the same time acknowledging a more sophisticated and complex aesthetic taste.

---

[14]Freud in Spector, p. 113.

[15]Gombrich in Fuller, p. 171.

[16]Gombrich differentiates between easy and hard art. He was influenced by Glover who wrote on the significance of orality in art. Developing on these ideas, Gombrich described two polarities in taste based on "oral gratification as a genetic model for aesthetic pleasure:" (Gombrich, p. 169.) On the one hand there is 'Soft' art - primitive, infantile, passive, sucking (for example, Bouguereau) - while on the other there is 'Crunchy' art -sophisticated, civilized, active, biting (for example, Cezanne). This idea of soft versus crunchy offers a way of distinguishing between preference for the more primitive oral gratification of passivity (art that is obvious, easily read or 'consumed') and viewers who are attracted to active oral gratification (which is more demanding and difficult to 'chew'). The latter group is threatened by the "regressive pull" (Spitz, p. 3.) of passivity and finds it distasteful. The former group would be threatened by the aggressivity inherent in crunchy art. In crunchy art the viewer must actively reintegrate for himself what has been wrenched apart.

The addition which Spitz finds important is Gombrich's incorporation of social context into the (biologically) literal theory of "taste." The characteristics of soft and crunchy, although linked to the development of erotogenic zones as described by Freud, are not perceived exclusively according to intrapsychic determinants. Cultural factors such as "tradition and convention outweigh personal elements."[17] In this model, it is not so much the unconscious (private) meanings that facilitate a shared art experience, but our common history (which dreams and the unconscious do not have) as contained in and communicated through the symbols.

> Without the social factors, what we may term the attitudes of the audience, the style or the trend, the private needs could not be transmuted into art. In this transmutation the private meaning is **all but** swallowed up.[18]

While form is "dream-like," it is mostly determined by its "adjustment to reality." Thus content follows form. While Gombrich uses Freudian theory in his explanation, his conclusion differs from Freud's in the amount of unconscious material considered to be present and operative in terms of aesthetic appreciation. Freud, as mentioned, considered the

---

[17]Spitz, p. 4.

[18]Gombrich in Spitz, p. 5, emphasis added.

audience to identify with the unconscious material presented in transformation. Spitz welcomes the reminder of other factors (historical, social, cultural) besides the intrapsychic that determine the individual's aesthetic response, but reiterates the importance of the "all but" part (emphasized in Gombrich's quote above) that remains and which psychoanalysis is especially equipped to address. She considers this to be another reason why the psychoanalytic perspective can supplement art history and philosophy of art, as well as vice-versa.

Kris

Kris also identifies two aspects of art; complexity and harmony. Unlike Gombrich, Kris does not conceive of them as two opposite modes (soft and crunchy) but as coexistent.[19] That is, the best art is considered to have an optimum ratio allowing the most ambiguity (complexity) with the most integration (harmony).

Kris restates some of Freud's ideas about art outlined in Chapter Two. According to Kris, the artist is able to relax the controls of reason and to loosen repression.[20] This state is similar to free association, central to the

---

[19]Ibid., p. 17.

[20]Spector, p. 106.

psychoanalytic process, since fantasies become available which can then be analyzed for unconscious content. The artist makes use of the now-accessible fantasies in his art work while the analysand uses them for treatment purposes.

Kris' describes "the artist's ability to tap unconscious sources without losing control",[21] and calls this 'regression in the service of the ego'. Kris was influenced by Rank and Sharpe who both differed from Freud in their emphasis on the artist's use of his fantasy as a form of **mastery** versus a kind of regression. Kris' version of the process highlights regression and mastery.

According to Kris, the artistic process is "a continual interplay between creation and criticism".[22] The creative aspect is characterized by "functional regression" while the criticism part entails judgment and control. While Freud believes the artist engages in the whole process to appease his "too clamorous" instincts, Kris suggests that the artist as engages in creative activities as a result of his special ability and superior ego, as opposed to being compelled by his demanding instincts. Despite the different emphases Freud and Kris were both inclined to search out the secrets

---

[21] Ibid., p. 107.

[22] Ibid.

that are sublimated in art. They also both stressed the necessity of a balance between psychic levels. Too much regression results in unappealing, private, overly-charged art work while the consequence of over-control is a cold, uninteresting product.

Kris emphasizes the role of the ego; its ability to control the creative process through free choice. Orthodox Freudians stress the deterministic element in creativity; the process is largely involuntary, determined by the unconscious. They take general exception to the ego-psychologist's optimistic portrayal of the strong ego in control of the id and to their suggestion that the ego does not grow from the id (as Freud first surmised) but is a "conflict-free"[23] domain unto itself, present at birth.

Kris uses his understanding of art gleaned through art historical training to detail a psychoanalytic explanation of the creative process that received less resistance than Freud's version. He identified certain impediments caused by past writers who have isolated a particular remark made by Freud on art resulting in distortions and misunderstandings. He sees psychoanalysis as an "open

---

[23]Ibid., p. 108.

system"[24] and regrets reductions of Freud's theories as well as the exclusion of alternative psychoanalytic theories. Having established a rationale, and coming from an art history background, he sets out to correct some of the errors caused by these limitations in a bid to connect psychoanalysis to art history.

Kris expounds a theory of art based on communication and the concepts of sender, message, and receiver. The message sent through art is not only related to action, spirituality, ideals, or information, but is "an invitation to common experience in the mind, to an experience of a specific nature."[25] The artist communicates with the viewer through symbols. The viewer receives the communication in phases through which he **identifies** with the art and the artist. Spitz draws the analogy to the therapeutic process itself in which the patient becomes his own analyst through identification with the analyst and through insight, also in phases[26]; the patient-viewer becomes the analyst-artist through the communicative process of slowly discovering the different levels of common experience.

---

[24] Ibid.

[25] Kris (1952) in Spitz, p. 9.

[26] Ibid.

The process just described works equally the other way; the artist is exploring boundaries and potentialities of communication through the manipulation and experimentation with aesthetic distance. Critical in the relationship between artist, work and viewer is the maintenance of this illusion, or proper aesthetic distance. Spitz likens this to the maintenance of a balance between empathy and neutrality in the analytic encounter.

Kris highlights "communication and re-creation"[27]. In his view, art is ambiguous, the aesthetic process is active, and form and content are inseparable:

> Communication lies not so much in the prior intent of the artist as in the consequent re-creation by the audience of his work of art. And re-creation is distinguished from sheer **reaction** to the work precisely by the fact that the person responding himself contributes to the stimuli for his response.[28]

The "preexistent content" (which Freud "unearthed") and intent of the artist was fixed for Freud and communicated to the viewer who shared the same unconscious aspirations. For Kris the identification is not as exact; it is based on similarities but some of the artist's original intention is irrelevant to the viewer while the viewer adds elements

---

[27]Kris in Spitz, p. 16.

[28]Kris, pp. 254 & 255.

unknown to the artist.[29] What is to be communicated then is not what was in the artist at the time of execution, but in the art work **now** (as perceived by the viewer).

Kris accentuates the "potential" of the symbol to assume many meanings in its interaction with the viewer who recreates it using his own unconscious material.[30] Rose concurs with Kris' emphasis on the value of form **in itself** (not as a conveyer of content) and claims that "an aesthetically sophisticated viewer exhausts the content" but not the form.[31]

Kris prefers to stress his connection with Freud while identifying differences. For example, he agrees that artistic creation includes regression, but adds that it is "purposive and controlled."[32] Also, Freud's concept of a **balance** of pleasure and reality finds its counterpart in Kris' notion of ambiguity; the potential of symbols to create tension and psychic shifts. Ambiguity can be "decorative" (stylish and artificial, perhaps referring to form as bribe and incentive bonus) or "expressive." Here we

---

[29]Spitz, p. 16.

[30]Kris, p. 255.

[31]Rose, pp. 7-8.

[32]Kris, p. 253.

run into another contentious point. Freud would consider "expression" to be evidence of form as content: That is, as expressive of the underlying motivations. But, once again Kris, like Gombrich turns this around. It is the ambiguity which allows and is responsible for the carrying of meaning; form, not as compliantly facilitating content "but as the instrument by which a content is **made** poetic through the process of re-creation".[33]

Rose goes even further in his argument for form as independent of content:

> If aesthetics is considered just a way of paying a bribe to the censor in order to gratify a forbidden wish in a somewhat attenuated form, then art is scarcely, if at all, distinguished from a neurotic symptom, dream, or joke.[34]
>
> And,
>
> Aesthetic form reflects and harmonizes the discrepancies and tensions caused by the formal characteristics of the mind. While accommodating both ambiguity and control, it sharpens thought as well as feeling, separation as well as fusion.[35]

Rose concludes with an ego-psychology (Kris) emphasis on conscious mastery, an object relations (Stokes and Winnicott) consideration of fusion and re-separation and a

---

[33]Ibid., p. 259.

[34]Rose, p. 8.

[35]Ibid., pp. 12-13.

statement on form that sounds remarkably like an acceptable restatement of Freud's concept of identification, without the emphasis of sexuality and giving primacy to form as the vehicle for the aesthetic process:

> The recognition by the viewer of the congruence between the outside, harmonious composition of art and his or her own inner, unreconciled struggle leads to responsive participation.[36]

Wollheim contributes his own restatement of Freud arguing that Freudian aesthetics do not amount to a theory of the art process as kneejerk reactions. Wollheim claims that Freud actually intended to develop the "constructive" aspect of art but never wrote the necessary comments that would counteract his "repression and pleasurable regression" theories.[37] He makes the case that Freud's understanding of art was not simple or derogatory. According to Wollheim, Freud recognized in art

> complex mental activities, which include efforts at mastery as well as regressive pleasure, ... flexibly moving backward and forward from manifest to latent, affectively as well as cognitively.[38]

---

[36]Ibid., p. 13.

[37]Ibid., p. 6.

[38]Spitz, p. 6.

Wollheim believes that, while the theory "of unconscious operations involving the ego"[39] was never developed by Freud, it is exemplified in his Moses (1914). According to Spitz, ego-psychologists and writers like Wollheim emphasize the mastery and ego functions even though Freud "focused on unconscious repression and pleasurable regression in art."[40] Spitz agrees that Freud's understanding of art was neither simplistic nor ignorant of the role of the ego but maintains that nevertheless his real contribution was the discovery of the connections between art and dreams, as highlighted by Paul Ricoeur (described later).

Fuller

In Art and Psychoanalysis Peter Fuller endeavors to reinforce a psychobiological aesthetics based on Marxist materialism with the aid of Freudian psychoanalysis.

He rejects Marx's suggestion that art is a result of political, social and economic conditions believing there must be a deeper level that can account for the shared aesthetic experience. The Marxist explanation that we relate to the art of other historic periods because it reflects our historic childhood, or, the more contemporary

---

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

version, that we relate to past art in re-constructed, re-interpreted form unrelated to the original context, ignores the possibility of a common appreciation of art and is therefore unsatisfactory. Fuller believes that psychoanalysis can lead the way towards a more solid materialist theory of aesthetics and away from its nemesis, formalist transcendence.

Nineteenth century idealist theories of transcendence are understood by Marxists as attempts to transform the historically specific into the eternal as behooves the particular ideology. The nineteenth century spiritual approach has given way to twentieth century formalism so that the transcendent element is not "out there", in correspondence to some cosmic deity, but within the art work itself. He takes issue with Roger Fry, a formalist critic who believes,

> The aesthetic emotion is an emotion about form. ... The form of a work of art has a meaning of its own and the contemplation of the form in and for itself gives rise in some people to a special emotion which does not depend upon the association of the form with anything what ever.[41]

The early psychoanalytic descriptions of the aesthetic process took on a tone which made it difficult for artists

---

[41]Fry in Fuller, p. 16.

and theorists to accept. This was due mostly to Freud's emphasis on **origin**. The origin can be a longing for the mother-infant relationship to which art work refers; a forbidden desire expressed in sublimated form in the art work; or a repressed, traumatic event cathartically projected onto the art work. In each case the motivation for making and appreciating art is clearly shifted from an "aesthetic" impulse "quite outside normal experience"[42] to an aesthetics quite inside the subject, based on psychic processes and, mostly, repressed desires.

Later psychoanalytic forays into art move a step closer to traditional aesthetic positions with the emphasis on meaning instead of origin. Charles Rycroft influences Fuller with his position that, "Psychoanalysis is not a causal theory but a semantic one"[43] but it is no less a "biological theory of meaning."[44] Subjectivity becomes the object. Fuller cites Marion Milner who also wrestles with the nature of the subject-object relationship in art and herein, too finds her clue to an aesthetic theory (see Chapter Four). Fuller finds the elements he needs in Milner, Rycroft and others to replace the transcendent portions of formalist theory with

---

[42]Clive Bell (1925) in Fuller, p. 17.

[43]Ibid., p. 21.

[44]Rycroft in Fuller, p. 22.

psycho(subjective)-biology(materialism) thereby combining psychoanalytic aesthetics with Marxist materialism.

While the idealists and formalists minimize the political, social and economic factors accentuated by the Marxists, other writers have charged that, not only some art historians but also, "analytic philosophy and psychoanalysis fail to consider art in its cultural-historical development."[45] Fuller reconsiders these factors giving primacy to the psycho-biological. He cites Raymond Williams, a Marxist writer on culture;

> Art work is itself, before everything, a material process [that] ... includes certain biological processes ... which are not a mere substratum but are at times the most powerful elements of the work.[46]

Fuller concludes that the biological element in art is the most significant; transcending cultural circumstance, and remaining constant (enough to be significant) throughout human history despite socio-economic conditions. The individual is a **psycho-biological** entity thus meanings are subjective and not scientifically verifiable. Fuller argues that attempts to justify psychoanalysis and search for origins in empirical methods or neuro-physiology are

---

[45]Hofstadter and Kuhns, p. xix.

[46]Williams in Fuller p. 20.

irrelevant. However, making the subject the object sounds like having it both ways: Meaning remains constant because our biological condition remains constant but meaning cannot be reduced to biological origins because meaning is experienced subjectively.

> Those representations [of our biological condition] - or more exactly, the ways in which the individual self experiences, organizes and sometimes distorts them - are among the objects of psychoanalytic inquiry.[47]

While the cause is ultimately physical (ie. relating to biology) the method of "inquiry is pursued within the territory of meaning."[48] Rycroft suggests that this paradox of subject as object leads to the much-debated epistemological problems particular to psychoanalysis. Art, the topic of similar polemic discourse, is an ally pervious to the same paradox. In the hands of Freud, art, like psychoanalysis, is scientized through a reduction to origin. Fuller doubts whether psychoanalysis should be treated like a natural science precisely because it is concerned with non-empirical subjective worlds and despite the fact that it is "intimately related to the biology of the human condition"[49] For Fuller, psychoanalysis is a means of both

---

[47] Ibid., p. 22.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., p. 23.

clarifying the material basis of aesthetics (in response to transcendent formalists) while underscoring the subjective, non-reductive aspect of aesthetics (in response to the oversimplification of Marxist materialists).

However, Fuller's psychoanalytic aesthetic based on Rycroft's concept of subjective meaning coupled with universal biology requires a re-evaluation of the primary process.

> Since psychoanalysis aims at being a scientific psychology, psychoanalytical observation and theorizing is involved in the paradoxical activity of using secondary process thinking to observe, analyze and conceptualize precisely that form of mental activity, the primary process, which scientific thinking has always been at pains to exclude.[50]

For Freud, the primary process is, "menacing, ... to be defeated by science and the Reality Principle."[51] He characterizes the id as impulsive and ultimately dangerous.[52] This resulted in the separation of chaotic and primitive capacities from positive and healthy ones. For example, Klein associates the primary process with madness.[53]

---

[50] Rycroft in Fuller, p. 172.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Hall, p. 34.

[53] Fuller, p. 172.

Rycroft contends that the primary and secondary processes are not mutually antagonistic, nor is the primary process maladaptive.[54] Fuller cites others writers who have refuted this description of the primary process. For example, Winnicott questions the whole concept of the paranoid-schizoid position with its "primary insanity."[55] According to Ehrenzweig, "the concept of the primary process as the archaic, wholly irrational function of the deep unconscious"[56] has been modified. The primary process is active in "many imaginative, creative and aesthetic endeavors."[57] Thus, modern art, which emphasizes primary process and which Freud found distasteful, is "not simply a regressive evasion of the world".[58]

Despite having written about it, Freud denies ever having experienced the oceanic feelings associated with the primary process.[59] Freud described oceanic feelings as related to

---

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ehrenzweig in Fuller, Ibid.

[57] Fuller on Rycroft, Ibid.

[58] Ibid., p. 173.

[59] This is related to Fuller's criticism that Freud neglected to analyze his relationship with his mother (where this theme might have emerged) and explains, among other things, his dismissal of Michelangelo's later unfinished sculptures. For Fuller, Freud's rejection of mysticism, religion, music and abstract art were not just indicative of a dedication to science and a bias towards the secondary process, but a disowning of important subjective realities and a misunderstanding of primary process due to faulty self analysis. Fuller, p. 175.

the infant's non-differentiation between internal and external reality. Mystical experience (and some aesthetic experience) is understood by Freud as a regression to this state. According to Fuller, Ehrenzweig points out that for Freud oceanic experience was not an hallucinatory illusion but an actual memory of early experience. Fuller believes that Freud misunderstands aesthetic oceanic feeling and the early mother-infant relationship, as elaborated by object relations theorists,[60] due to his personal insensitivity and denial.

The modernist approach which, in Fuller's view, involves the primary process is not mere nostalgia nor a return to infantile fantasies of fusion, but an expression of the artist's relationship to the world which necessarily corresponds to the original object relation. The mother-infant relationship is part of the material foundation on which aesthetic experience is based:

> While the specific "structure of feeling," that is the assertion of an autonomous domain of the aesthetic, may be ideological, the feelings that are so structured are not. They are aroused because the artist has succeeded in giving effective pictorial expression, through the material process of his medium, to an experience which is in some way recognized - though not necessarily consciously identified - by his receptive viewers. This experience, I am suggesting, pertains to the

[60] Ibid., p. 167.

> elements of the "human condition" which cannot be reduced to socio-economic variables, however much they may be mediated by them. Thus the phenomenon which in bourgeois aesthetic is described as "transcendence" may often in fact be a penetration downwards into the obscure terrain of biological potentiality rather than a reaching "upwards" into the mythical Crocean realms of ethereal "spirit."[61]

Ricoeur

While Fuller uses psychoanalysis to reinforce his materialist aesthetics, Ricoeur posits psychoanalysis as a hermeneutic. Ricoeur considers Freud's understanding of dreams to be a model for interpreting, not only art, but culture.

Dreams are deeply embedded in the cultural context so that history is pervaded with unconscious material. The meanings of the archaic "disguised fulfillment of repressed wishes"[62] found in daily waking life can be interpreted like dreams since the unconscious uses the same dream work mechanisms to disguise all unconscious material whether manifested as remembered dream, myth or art. This "language of desire"[63] is constantly in flux so as to fool the censor. In waking

---

[61] Ibid., p. 187.

[62] Ricoeur, p. 159.

[63] Ibid., p. 160.

life, man gratifies his dream wishes through disguise, regression and symbols:

> The interpretation of culture will be the great detour that will reveal the dream model in its universal significance. Dreams will prove to be something quite other than a mere curiosity of nocturnal life or a means of getting at neurotic conflicts. Dreams are the **royal road to psychoanalysis.** Their function as a model stems from the fact that they reveal all that is nocturnal in man, the nocturnal of his waking life as well as of his sleep ... Psychoanalysis is of value insofar as art, morality, and religion are analogous figures or variants of the oneiric mask. The entire drama of dreams is thus found to be generalized to the dimensions of a universal poetics.[64]

Thus, Ricoeur's claim of art as dream is only one part of his theory of all of waking life as dream.

In contrast to Spector and Fuller, and contradicting Rose's earlier statement about Freud's equation of art and illusion, Ricoeur considers Freud's insight and "great philosophical design"[65] to include art.

> Freud's sympathy for the arts is equaled only by his severity toward religious illusion ... For Freud, art is the **nonobsessional, non-neurotic** form of substitute satisfaction: the charm of aesthetic creation does **not** stem from the return of the repressed.[66]

---

[64] Ibid., p. 162.

[65] Ibid., p. 163.

[66] Ibid., emphasis added.

If the aesthetic component in art does not come from the release of unconscious material, where does it come from? Ricoeur concludes that two other areas, besides the dream, are relevant to the understanding of art; (1) play, the child's mastery over the mother's absence and not just the hallucinatory transformation of the wish for her presence, and (2) the vicissitudes of fantasies and daydreams, which occur in real time. Play is like art in that it is heavily invested with emotion but the creator knows that he has created it and that it is different from reality. Fantasy allows the creator to make endless substitutes for the same impulse. Thus, the motive is still and always the gratification of a wish, but in conscious wish-making something new is added. The mastery of play and the ingenuity in transforming wishes adds a technical element of great importance.

The real aim of a work of art is to allow the viewer maximum pleasure with minimum resistance. The viewer can indulge his fantasies without fear of reprisal from the superego. Thus, the appreciation of the formal (or technical, in the Freudian wording of Ricoeur) qualities of the work of art are seen to play a role in both disguising the unacceptable content of the work and spurring us on to the deeper pleasures that await us. Far from considering this

derogatory (many have been insulted to think that their consciousness could be so easily duped and "bribed"), Ricoeur calls Freud's discovery that contemplation of form releases otherwise repressed and tension-causing material, "daring."[67] In this way, the "language of desire" is seen to follow the principles of an "economics of desire," the discharge of as much tension as possible.[68] Ricoeur restates Freudian aesthetics so that the concept of form as incentive bonus or bribe is replaced by the ultimately analogous but more aesthetic-sounding idea of pleasure from form.

Pleasure from technique proceeds as follows: The viewer experiences a slight pleasure from the technique, with all its non-threatening signs of mastery, and is then both drawn in and enabled to experience a deeper pleasure, that of gratifying his instincts.

> The connection between technical and instinctual pleasure constitutes the core of Freudian aesthetics and relates that aesthetics to the economics of instincts and pleasure.[69]

The pleasure in form is like a release mechanism which opens the way to a more powerful source of pleasure.

---

[67]Ibid., p. 167.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Ibid., p. 168.

The role of play, fantasy, pleasure and technique can be summarized as follows:

> By means of the forepleasure (or pleasure bonus) that the artist's technique offers us, profound sources of tension are liberated; on the other hand, through symbolism, the fantasies of the abolished past are recreated in the light of day.[70]

It remains to fit this explanation of art within the greater context of culture.

Ricoeur suggests that in its method of analyzing minute details, Freud's interpretation of Michelangelo's Moses follows the principle (outlined in Jokes) of separating out the greater pleasures from behind the technical pleasures. The result is the discovery of multiple, endless, multiplicities of meaning (symbolic overdetermination) relating to Moses, Pope Julius, Michelangelo and Freud. According to Ricoeur, this is as it should be.

In comparison to "The Moses of Michelangelo," (1914) the method of the much-maligned Leonardo has engendered, from Freud's loyal and imitative followers, the "wrong sort of psychoanalysis of art - biological psychoanalysis."[71] The

---

[70] Ibid., p. 332.

[71] Ibid., p. 170.

problem is that

> Freud seems to go far beyond the structural analogies that would be authorized by an analysis of the technique of composition and enters into instinctual themes that the painting disavows and conceals.[72]

The taking of such liberties has added to the negative reputation of psychoanalysis as pretentious. However, Ricoeur does point out that Freud does not claim that Leonardo is about art, but the inhibition of sexuality and creativity. In it, he makes other contributions, for example, about the relation of knowledge and desire. Ricoeur uses his own analytic powers to rescue the work; that is to interpret its ultimate significance, discussed later.

While in Leonardo Freud attempted to analyze a dead artist, in Moses he analyzed an existing art work. Ricoeur points out the important difference between these approaches, associating the first with 'bad' analysis and the second with 'good' interpretation of an autonomous text.[73] Freud himself admits the limitation of deciphering symbols: The applied analyst can show that the art activity was motivated by the artist's repressed wishes made accessible

---

[72] Ibid., p. 171.

[73] Kuhns reiterates this point in Psychoanalytic Theory of Art. He advocates a moving "away from the psychoanalysis of the artist to the psychoanalytic interpretation of the work of art." (Kuhns, p. 92.) He sees this as "the goal of a psychoanalytic theory of art." Ibid.

through regression and manifested in the art, but this is only to draw an analogy with the usual model of looking at any psychic material. What does it tell us about art? According to Freud, it does not even help us to penetrate the mystery of the artistic activity, alternately deemed to be within and outside the scope of psychoanalysis:

> Since artistic talent and capacity are intimately connected with sublimation we must admit that the nature of the artistic function is also inaccessible to us along psychoanalytic lines.[74]

Does this mean that the investigation is for naught? Ricoeur suggests that the real contribution lies in the following line:

> It is possible that in these figures Leonardo **denied** the unhappiness of his erotic life and has **triumphed over** it in his art, by representing the wishes of the boy, infatuated with his mother, as fulfilled.[75]

Freud's detailed analysis has not uncovered the mystery that is sublimation. The Leonardo text does not tell us why Leonardo was an artistic genius: It simply shows that, in keeping with psychoanalytic theory, sexual repression, which could have given rise to neurosis, was averted by its sublimation into activities that gratify the instinct in another form. Sexual repression leads to "inhibition of thought and neurotic compulsive thinking" if the individual

---

[74]Freud in Ricoeur, p. 172.

[75]Freud in Ricoeur, p. 173, emphasis added.

does not possess that "special disposition" of the artist which enables him tc sublimate, the "rarest and most perfect" way of dealing with sexual repression.[76] Thus, and this is the point that pathography teaches, according to Ricoeur, we can know that the artist sublimates, but we cannot know sublimation.

Ricoeur seizes on this point and which leads us back to tie up the earlier clues about the significance of the 'failure' of the Leonardo text. Freudian psychoanalysis does not, cannot, 'uncover' anything: That for which it searches, the sublimated, the repressed, is unknowable. Freud tries to unwrap art, the "psychical derivatives"[77] of instincts and admits failure. It is precisely in this failure that Ricoeur finds its success. It is an attestation that the unconscious per se is not tc be found in the art; rather, it is the absence of the unconscious material that is to be found there. That is, these memories and myths on which Freud bases his interpretations are themselves the

> symbolizable absence, ... the empty place within reality; the point where all real traces become lost, where the abolished confines one to fantasy.[78]

---

[76]Ibid., p. 171.

[77]Ibid., p. 174.

[78]Ibid., p. 174.

This "intended absence" can never be "better known" despite Freud's or anyone's best efforts.[79] These signified absences (lost past, memories) are collected in art and myths and make up culture. According to Ricoeur, the real significance of Freud's quote above (page 79) is that, "Leonardo's brush does not recreate the memory of the mother, it creates a work of art."[80] The work of art manifests the lost memory, the absence of the object, and yet is a creation of a new object. Ricoeur, believing this to be implied in Freud's quote, declares, "The work of art is thus both symptom and cure."[81]

Freud's theory of sublimation does not solve the mystery of art; it confirms it. The unconscious can never be known through dream, art or other. But the oneiric model is fraught by one major problem: Art is not dream in that it is socially valuable and becomes part of shared culture, or 'shared dream.' The difference has to do with the **curative** component: Where-as

> Dreams look backward, toward infancy, the past; the work of art goes ahead of the artist; it is a prospective symbol of his personal synthesis and of man's future, rather than a regressive symbol of his unresolved conflicts. ... Could it be that the true meaning of sublimation is to promote

---

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

> new meanings by mobilizing old energies initially invested in archaic figures?[82]

Ricoeur believes this is the direction indicated by Freud. Freud stated that psychoanalysis has not shown us the mystery that is art, only that this mystery is manifested in art and that its intelligibility is limited.[83]

> Interpretation does not uncover a real **thing**, not even a psychical thing; the desire to which interpretation refers us is itself a reference to the series of its "derivatives" and an indefinite self-symbolization.[84]

The art work has elements which are absent (memories) and present (paint, canvas), symptomatic and curative. The part that is absent, the shared dream, and that which is present, the painting, both exist within culture. Because of this, psychoanalysis must move from the reductive, individual realm to the domain of the cultural; from unmasking "the absent reality signified by desire" [85] to the real art work, the autonomous text, within culture,

> The only thing that gives presence to the artist's fantasies is the work of art; and the reality thus conferred upon them is the reality of the work of art itself within a world of culture.[86]

---

[82] Ibid., p. 175.

[83] Freud in Ricoeur, p. 172.

[84] Ricoeur, p. 176.

[85] Ibid., p. 177.

[86] Ibid.

Thus, Ricoeur explains the place of art in relation to dream and culture. He addresses one more question to be covered here. As previously stated, we cannot know sublimation, but can we know something about aesthetics? It has already been stated that aesthetics, form or technique can charm and seduce us, thereby lowering our inhibitions and encouraging us on to greater pleasures (tension releases). In this way, the function of aesthetics is to bridge the real world (in which the physical art work exists) and the world of dreams (the absences to which the work refers). That is, the aesthetic function is located "on the path leading from the pleasure principle to the reality principle."[87] Ricoeur argues that according to Freud, art is not illusion (like religion) nor regression ("the return of the repressed."[88]) In art the two positions are reconciled: The artist refuses to submit to the reality principle and give up instinctual pleasure but, unlike the neurotic, he has the means to transform his desires, through fantasy, play and technical gifts, into a new reality. In the art work and through the art process, his desire is made real. In Freud's words, cited earlier, the "satisfaction, which results from the replacement of the pleasure principle by the reality

---

[87]Ibid., p. 333.

[88]Freud in Ricoeur, ibid.

principle, is itself part of reality."[89]

Thus, sublimation is real. It allows the interplay of the two positions. Yet, Freud maintained the predominance of the pleasure principle in the artistic process. Art then, is destined to be ancillary in a Weltanschauung based on the primacy of the reality principle. Society can only be saved through education (that is the control of narcissism through submission to the reality principle), not art. Why did Freud not advocate education through aesthetics? "Resignation to necessity ... is the great work of life" and it is not aesthetic![90] But we do not have to stop here; "If art cannot take the place of wisdom, it does lead to it in its own way."[91]

It seems that Ricoeur would like to conclude that aesthetics can save us all but sees that, in Freud's model, this cannot be. Art is relegated to the position of facilitator; strong, but without the power of science. Art, with its capacity to resolve conflicts and transform desire, helps us to resign to the reality principle.

> Prior to wisdom, while waiting for wisdom, the symbolic mode proper to the work of art enables us to endure the

---

[89] Ibid., p. 334.

[90] Ricoeur, p. 335.

[91] Ibid.

> harshness of life, and, suspended between illusion and reality, helps us love fate.[92]

Thus, there is no 'aesthetic principle' "beyond the reality principle." And yet, with my patients, I can almost sense an 'aesthetic instinct.' According to Ricoeur, Freud can take us no further than the place where, "there is a concurrence of scientism and romanticism."[93]

Other theories related to these issues will be discussed in Chapter Four: Kleinian aesthetics relies heavily on the theory of sublimation in a developed form, stressing symbolism, while Winnicott bases his aesthetics on a sophisticated theory of play.

---

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid., p. 337.

CHAPTER FOUR

OBJECT RELATIONS THEORIES OF ART

Kleinian and Winnicottian object relations theories are among the major developments to have evolved from Freudian psychoanalysis and to have made special contributions to a psychoanalytic theory of art. This chapter follows the shift in concentration from the Oedipal conflict (Freud) to the first months of life (Klein) to the mother-infant relationship (Winnicott) and describes the significance of these theoretical changes to the understanding of art. The shift in focus from art as instinctual sublimation (Freud) to re-creation and reparation (Klein) to creativity within the transitional space (Winnicott) will be traced.

The first section describes what is involved in the development from Freudian to object relations theory and identifies distinctions between Freudian, Kleinian and Winnicottian theory. Following this, a general description of Kleinian theory will be outlined and the ideas of Adrian Stokes and Hanna Segal on the significance of Kleinian theory to art will be discussed. The next section examines object relations theory from the perspectives of Winnicott and Milner. Concepts such as creativity, transitional space and imagination will be described.

From Freud to Object Relations

The following quote from Winnicott indicates what is involved in the development from Freudian theory to object relations theory.

> There is plenty of reference in psychoanalytic literature to the progress from 'hand to mouth' to 'hand to genital', but perhaps less to further progress to the handling of truly 'not-me' objects. Sooner or later in an infant's development there comes a tendency on the part of the infant to weave other-than-me objects into the personal pattern. To some extent these objects stand for the breast, but it is not especially this point that is under discussion.[1]

In object relations theory the relationship of sexuality to art differs from Freud's original conception. Freud "conceived of the infant as auto-erotic and narcissistic,"[2] interested in objects only insofar as they could gratify his needs and thus decrease tension. The individual develops according to libidinal stages which determine the form of the particular instinctual urges. According to Winnicott, this theory alone cannot explain creativity, play and art. Playing stops when "physical excitement of instinctual involvement becomes evident."[3] Winnicott stipulates that play and art are in no way linked to masturbation. Their

---

[1] D. W. Winnicott, Playing and Reality, p. 3.

[2] Fuller p. 159.

[3] Winnicott, op cit., p. 45.

excitement stems from their situation precariously between that which is subjectively and objectively perceived.[4]

Fuller suggests that Freud's concentration on instincts and consequent lack of emphasis on the early relationship is the result of Freud's incomplete self-analysis regarding his relationship to his mother. This was compounded by the 19th century context in which more importance was placed on the paternal, and hence the later oedipal relationship, than the earlier mother-infant interaction.[5] Fuller suggests that this was remedied in part by Klein who maintains an emphasis on instincts but concentrates on their development in the first months of life and Winnicott, who highlights the early mother-infant relationship over the unfolding of instincts and their vicissitudes.

Klein suggests that the infant feels genuine love for the mother very early. This seems incompatible with Freud's conception of the infant as completely self-centered; the infant would not be aware of the needs or wishes of the parents until much later, as part of superego formation. Klein claims that the infant is aware of and has feelings towards the parents but that the infant is still

---

[4]Ibid., p. 61.

[5]Fuller p. 159.

predominantly engaged in the business of instinct gratification. Thus, Klein adheres to Freud's instinct-based theory; the difference is that Freud concentrates on the life and death drive and their resolution during the Oedipal stage while Klein postulates love and hate and their acceptance in the much earlier depressive position. Unlike Winnicottians, Kleinians maintain the Freudian notion that sexuality is a major factor in creative sublimation. Sublimation, reparation and recreation are procreative and thereby related to the mature attainment of the genital position.[6]

Despite similarities with Freud, Klein conceives differently of certain concepts including ego-development. Freud hypothesizes that the ego becomes differentiated from the id only as a result of the reality principle. Klein believes that the infant is born with a rudimentary ego which grows through the continual process of projection and introjection. Introjection is the replacement of the relationship to an object 'out there' with an imagined object 'inside'. In projection, the inner impulses, wishes, or objects are seen as existing in the outer world. Also, "representations of objects which are introjected can

---

[6]Segal in Melanie Klein, et. al., New Directions in Psychoanalysis, p. 392.

themselves have been distorted by projections."[7]

Klein also elaborated the aetiology and dynamics of the superego explaining that it is not only the parent introjects but the introjection of the fantasy of the parent which explains the "archaic severity"[8] of the superego.

> When, at the height of his oedipus complex, the child turns against the parent he wishes to displace, he projects his own aggression upon this parent, who in his imagination becomes a veritable ogre and is, as such, introjected to form his super-ego.[9]

According to Kleinians Freud's important discoveries, from which Kleinian theories developed, include:[10]

The oedipus complex

Early sexuality
and its course of development (oral, anal, genital)

The superego
as including more than conscious conscience, as strong and archaic, linked with disappearance of the oedipal complex since it represses the incestuous and parricidal impulses which occur at this time, resulting from the child's 'incorporation' of the image of the feared parent.

Unconscious aggression

---

[7]Fuller, p. 114.

[8]Money-Kyrle in Klein, p. xi.

[9]Ibid., xii.

[10]Ibid., pp. x & xi.

> from the death instinct, felt at first as a threat to the self and then projected out and felt as an external threat which can be dealt with through escape or destruction of the external object.

In object relations theory the traditional concepts of conscious and unconscious are shifted to a distinction between outer and inner reality.

Building on Kleinian theory, other object relations theorists emphasize the centrality of the infant's and individual's relationships with people and things (objects) **over** dual instincts. In fact, one way of describing object relations theory[11] is to consider the primary instinct to be the desire to relate to objects.

The difference between Freud, Klein and Winnicott can be illustrated using the example of their conceptions of the breast. Freud idealized the infant's relation to the breast: He conceived of early infancy as the "golden years"[12] and the breast as "the first **object** of sexual desire ... the unattainable prototype of every later sexual satisfaction ... through transformation and substitution."[13] Thus, for Freud the breast is the first sexual object. For

---

[11] Fairbairn in Fuller, p. 163.

[12] Freud in Spector, p. 136.

[13] Freud, A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, p. 323, emphasis added.

Klein, the breast is the first instinctual object onto which love and hate are projected, while for Winnicott the breast is the first 'not me' object in the environment that the infant relates to, the experience of which influences future object relations.

Winnicott and Milner suggest that creativity develops from (and continues to provide) the satisfactions of the primary mother-infant relationship, and emphasize the role of the **objective** world in aesthetic experience. Marion Milner (1960) writes:

> Thus it seems that, behind the states that are often rather loosely talked about by psychoanalysts as auto-erotic and narcissistic, there can be an attempt to reach a beneficent kind of narcissism, a primary self-enjoyment which is in fact a cathexis of the whole body, as distinct from concentrating on the specifically sexual organs; and which, if properly understood, is not a rejection of the outer world but a step towards a renewed and revitalized cathexis of it.[14]

For Milner, the objective component of aesthetics has to do with a relation to the **outer** world through the **whole** body. Thus, art-making is not seen to derive only from the infant's gratification at, and hatred of, the breast (Klein) but as a result of the reciprocal process of relating the internal to the external.

---

[14]Marion Milner, Eternity's Sunrise, p. 42.

Klein, Segal, and Stokes

Klein highlighted the instinct-based aspect of Freud's psychology and took literally his concept of the opposing life and death instincts, first suggested in Beyond the Pleasure Principle in 1920. Her theory is founded on the assumption of innate ambivalence between love and hate, the emotional result of a life-and death-instinct opposition.

According to Klein, the infant must cope with strong instinctual drives (experienced emotionally as love and hate) in relation to the mother and her breast. The destructive drive (including sadism and aggression) is seen as a defense against the inherent self-destructive death instinct; that is, the aggression is projected out to protect the self. Between six and twelve months the infant's aggressive and sadistic phantasies (completely unconscious) aim at destroying the mother with teeth, nails, excreta, etc, and the infant phantasies objects inside the mother's body which it greedily wishes to scoop out, devour and destroy. The outcome, whether the infant achieves love through the toleration of depression from guilt and the impulse to repair the damage done through earlier aggression, "determines the stability of his health, or the liability of his illness."[15] Klein concentrates on the

[15]Money-Kyrle in Klein, p. xiii.

first months of life and the onset of the depressive position as the decisive developmental event which is in contrast to Freud who focuses on the oedipal conflict which begins between the ages of three to five and can be resolved in adolescence.

Thus, Klein postulates the onset of the struggle between opposing instincts earlier than does Freud thereby modifying the psychoanalytic view of libidinal development. She suggests that the early onset is characterized by two principal phases. Normally the paranoid-schizoid position is followed by the depressive position but, owing to regression and fixation, they may alternate or coexist with later stages. The positions are characterized as follows:

Paranoid Schizoid	**Depressive Position**
-infant splits, object is either good or bad -introjects good breast, loves it -introjects bad breast resulting in persecutory anxiety and frustration -projection of own anger into bad breast, hates it -relates to part objects (mother's body) -blissful satisfaction (fusion with good object)	-infant accepts ambivalence -relates to whole object with good and bad together -love together with hate -guilt and depression about former destructiveness -may adopt manic defense, deny former destruction, regress to persecutory anxiety -if depression is tolerated reparative impulse is directed towards mother, internal objects and parental couple -capable of unselfish concern and protective love

Chart III: The Two Positions

In Kleinian theory, the oedipal complex and superego have their roots in these two early periods and not in the genital stage of development. A securely established good object, that is, the successful resolution of the depressive position, results in the ego feeling rich and abundant so that an outpouring of libido is possible without a sense of depletion. A balance between projection (giving out love) and introjection (taking in love) is established and the split object is synthesized so that the same object can be loved and hated.[16]

Klein's analytic technique is based on the theory: The analyst will see the two positions reflected in the analysand's attitude towards him. The infant's and analysands phantasies are "psychic representations"[17] of pure instinct. They are disguised and defended against in the same way as in dreams. The "free association method ... remains the only satisfactory way at once of exploring the unconscious and making it conscious to patients, and so relieving them of its irrational effects."[18] Since this method was not possible with children Klein developed the

---

[16]Klein, ibid., pp. 312 & 313.

[17]Susan Isaacs in Fuller, p. 113.

[18]Money-Kyrle, op cit, p. x.

play technique, an alternative to free association with words:

> She provided them with toys, and encouraged them to "play freely" ... She then "interpreted" their play, that is, she described to them the feelings and fantasies which seemed to be expressed by it.[19]

According to Kleinians art can be interpreted like symbolic play and is understood as a capacity developed in the depressive position. The experience of total destruction effected in the paranoid-schizoid position gives rise to depression, guilt and the desire to restore in the depressive position: "What has been destroyed must be re-created, reconstructed, regained."[20] The reparative impulse is directed towards the external object (mother's body) and internal object (introjection of mother's body). The repaired internal object is then externalized and given a life of its own; that is, the new introjection is projected. One way an internal object is projected and given a life of its own is through art-making:

> The reparative impulses, "the wish and the capacity for restoration of the good object, internal and external," are held to be "a fundamental drive in all artistic creativity."[21]

---

[19] Ibid., p. xii.

[20] Segal in Fuller, p. 115.

[21] Fuller quoting Segal, p. 116.

Because the depressive position is central to Kleinian aesthetics, the following description by Hanna Segal is quoted at length:

> The whole object is loved and introjected and forms the core of an integrated ego. But this new constellation ushers in a new anxiety situation; where earlier the infant feared an attack on the ego by persecutory objects, now the predominant fear is that of the loss of the loved object in the external world and in his own inside. The infant at that stage is still under the sway of uncontrollable greedy and sadistic impulses. In phantasy his loved object is continually attacked in greed and hatred, is destroyed, torn into pieces and fragments; and not only is the external object so attacked but also the internal one, and then the whole internal world feels destroyed and shattered as well. Bits of the destroyed object may turn into persecutors, and there is a fear of internal persecution as well as a pining for the lost loved object and guilt for the attack. The memory of the good situation, where the infant's ego contained the whole loved object, and the realization that it has been lost through his own attacks, gives rise to an intense feeling of loss and guilt, and to the wish to restore and recreate the lost love object outside and within the ego. This wish to restore and recreate is the basis of later sublimation and creativity.[22]

Thus, the artist in the depressive position repairs the damage he had previously effected to his internal and external world. Artistic creativity, then, is seen to operate on both sides of the introjection-projection cycle.

---

[22]Segal in Klein, p. 386.

The art object is the external receptacle, symbolic of the mother's body, for the projection of the reparative impulse. This reparation would not be effective without the process of projection and re-introjection since the original damage was external and internal; the process of introjection and projection requires a container in both realms. The restored object can subsequently be introjected in its repaired form and be granted a life of its own (like the mother who is eventually seen to exist according to her own free will rather than from the need of the infant) in the external world.

Hanna Segal maintains that:

> There can be a psychoanalytic view of art which can contribute to our understanding of artistic form and process no less than content.[23]

She bases her exegesis on Kleinian theory. Like Klein, she considers her theories to derive from Freud: "Freud's discovery of unconscious phantasy life and symbolism made it possible to attempt a psychological interpretation of art."[24] While Segal concurs with Freud that the success of the artist's achievements are his "innermost secret,"[25] she suggests nonetheless an explanation is possible and depends

---

[23]Segal in Fuller, p. 109.

[24]Segal in Klein, p. 384.

[25]Ibid.

upon a better understanding of the creative impulse and sublimation.[26] Segal claims that Kleinian theory has enabled analysts to address aesthetic questions pertaining to the nature of creativity, beauty and ugliness, the value of art, the experience of the viewer and the abilities of the artist.

Segal identifies three psychoanalytic approaches to art:

(1) Focus on the individual;

The personal history of the artist is reconstructed and the artist is analyzed through his art work.

(2) Focus on a psychological problem;

A specific psychological problem (for example infantile anxieties in Freud's "The Theme of the Three Caskets") is identified and the latent content expressed through the art is analyzed.

(3) Focus on an aesthetic problem;

Psychoanalytic theory can be applied to aesthetic problems such as What is good art? in addition to the traditional Why do we derive pleasure from art?, What did the artist express? and Why did he express that?

The concept of the depressive position provides the model for answering these questions and explaining the function and meaning of art[27] as is done, for example, in the long quote by Segal on page 97. In place of the projection and denial of internal reality, characteristic of the paranoid schizoid position, the infant develops a clearer definition

---

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., p. 385.

of inner and outer reality. When the object is perceived as a good and bad whole the infant can experience ambivalence and responsibility.[28] "Depressive phantasies give rise to the wish to repair and restore,"[29] as long as depression can be tolerated and psychic reality maintained. The toleration of the anxiety is paramount. If this is accomplished and the chosen mode of repair is artistic creation then the result will be integrated and insightful art work that does not deny chaos or destruction.

If the infant does not have this capacity to tolerate he cannot restore the object and therefore experiences it as lost or destroyed. He cannot take responsibility for this destruction and consequently projects his hopelessness into the object. He perceives the object as persecutory and is not aware that it is his own aggression towards the object that is being perceived. He protects his weak ego from guilt, loss and persecution through "denial of psychic reality, omnipotent control, and a partial regression to the paranoid-schizoid position and its defenses: splitting, idealization, denial, projective identification, etc."[30] According to Segal, the artist creating in this mode will

---

[28]Ibid., p. 386.

[29]Ibid., p. 387.

[30]Ibid.

invariable make second-rate, defensive, sentimental or manic art (despite its possible resemblance to depression position art) in keeping with the paranoid-schizoid disposition.

In normal development the infant is reassured that the object is not lost or destroyed by his aggression. This increases his confidence (ego-strength) so that he is encouraged to develop his ability to restore and to give up regressive manic defenses. His capacity to repair allows him to experience the otherwise threatening feelings of loss, guilt and love. The repeated process of loss and restoration establishes the continuity of the love object and its assimilation into the ego. The ego assimilates more and more love objects until, eventually, dependence on the actual external love object is lessened and deprivation can be better tolerated. "Aggression and love can be tolerated and guilt gives rise to the need to restore and re-create."[31]

For this state of development to occur, the individual must be aware (unconsciously) of the connection between inner and outer reality. If inner and outer reality is split, as in the paranoid-schizoid position, then there is no need to repair damage since the infant's own aggression is either

---

[31]Ibid., p. 388.

not acknowledged or it is perceived as in response persecution from an object which is unconnected to the self. When the connection between inner and outer is recognized, then the infant can be creative. He has learned that reparation of the external world will lead to internal organization and completion. This creative state of reparative interaction between inner and outer is the basis of art-making according to Kleinians.

> The task of the artist lies in the creation of a world of his own ... It is only when the loss has been acknowledged and the mourning experienced that re-creation can take place.[32]

An acceptance of the separation between inner and outer does not come easily; it is the result of a mourning process which, in a way, never ends. That is, the creative process is an attempt to re-create objects in the art work that have been externally given up and internally reinstated in the ego.[33] For Klein, this mourning is symbolic of early depressive anxieties as a result of the loss of early objects, namely, the parents.

> All creation is really re-creation of a once loved and once whole, but now lost and ruined object, a ruined internal world and self.[34]

---

[32] Ibid., pp. 388 & 389.

[33] Ibid., p. 390.

[34] Ibid.

Inhibitions in artistic expression are caused by the inability to acknowledge and overcome depressive anxiety. If the inclusion of negative or depressive elements cannot be tolerated then the individual can only create 'pretty,' superficial work.

Segal found that patients suffering from creative inhibitions were also sexually maladjusted. The genital aspect of artistic creation is central since it is the psychic equivalent of procreation.

> The ability to deal with the depressive position, however, is the precondition of both genital and artistic maturity. If the parents are felt to be so completely destroyed that there is no hope of ever re-creating them, a successful identification is not possible, and neither can the genital position be maintained nor the sublimation in art develop.[35]

Segal links Freudian sublimation of sexuality to reparative, re-creative impulse of the depressive position since both are the result of tolerated mourning. Thus, sublimation and sexuality are related to "successful symbol formation [which] is rooted in the depressive position."[36]

Segal understands Freudian sublimation to refer to creation that arises from the "successful renunciation of an

---

[35]Ibid., pp. 392-393.

[36]Ibid., p. 396.

instinctual aim."[37] In Kleinian terms, the loss or unavailability of the object (the instinctual aim) is accepted. However, Segal adds the important Kleinian caveat: "Successful renunciation can only happen through a process of mourning."[38] While the object is externally lost it is internally restored: "Such an assimilated object becomes a symbol within the ego."[39] Thus, the process of relating to, losing and mourning objects gives rise to symbol formation.

> If psychic reality is experienced and differentiated from external reality, the symbol is differentiated from the object; it is felt to be created by the self and can be freely used by the self.[40]

Thus, the acknowledgement of the separation between internal and external reality facilitates successful symbol formation. The differentiation between the re-created object and original object gives rise to confidence and ability (mastery) since the individual feels in control of the object.

---

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., p. 397.

[40] Ibid.

The description of the necessary conditions for successful symbol formation and the distinction between paranoid-schizoid art and depressive position art have led to a Kleinian definition of pure artist versus neurotic artist. Segal addresses the following statement of Freud's, previously quoted at length in Chapter Two:

> The artist finds a way of returning from the world of phantasy back to reality, with his special gifts he moulds his phantasies into a new kind of reality.[41]

Segal understands the "special gifts" to include "acute reality sense."[42] In keeping with the Kleinian emphasis on the importance of distinguishing between internal and external reality, the artist is considered to be endowed with a special ability to differentiate between the two while the neurotic does not. Segal allows for the possibility that a true artist may share the neurotic's lack of external objectivity but the artist always has **a special awareness of his own internal reality and his chosen art medium**; that is, he is objective about himself and his art. Segal gives the example of Proust who, despite his neurosis, had real insight into his internal world and phantasy. The neurotic, on the other hand, splits off, represses, denies or acts out his internal phantasies.

---

[41]Freud in Segal in Klein, p. 397.

[42]Segal in Klein, ibid.

The artist is saved from such subjective behavior because of his heightened awareness. His sensitivity to his material is in contrast to the neurotic or bad artist's magical use of material. The real artist is aware of both internal and external to the point where he can control the external material to express internal phantasy material. Both the neurotic and artist have depression and are threatened by the collapse of the internal world, but the neurotic, unlike the artist, has no way of coping with depression or tolerating anxiety. He cannot sublimate or form symbols because he cannot separate external and internal reality - instead, he must regress to paranoid-schizoid defenses to deny his own psychic reality.

The artist fully experiences mourning which enables insight and separation of internal and external reality. This reality sense enables him to have object relations through his art. The artist's phantasy feeds his relationships while the neurotic's phantasy interferes with relationships because he acts the phantasies out in them. The artist's ability to differentiate between inner and outer allows him to withdraw into his phantasy and re-emerge from it to communicate to others.

> In that way he makes reparation, not only to his own internal objects, but to the external world as well.[43]

---

[43] Ibid., p. 398.

The work of art is the artist's "most complete and satisfactory way of allaying the guilt and despair arising out of the depressive position and of restoring his destroyed objects."[44]

Segal differentiated between conscious and unconscious identification with art. Conscious identification occurs with good and bad art alike, since the **content** is related to, not the aesthetic. In true aesthetic pleasure, however, the viewer identifies unconsciously with the work of art as a whole including the internal world of the artist as represented by the work.

> In my view, all aesthetic pleasure includes an unconscious reliving of the artist's experience of creation ... What the artist aims at is to awaken in us the same mental constellation as that which in him produced the impetus to create ... I assume that this kind of unconscious reliving of the creator's state of mind is the foundation of all aesthetic pleasure.[45]
>
> Out of all the chaos and destruction, he has created a world which is whole, complete and unified.[46]

The artist expresses the full horror of depressive phantasy (chaos, death instinct) as well as wholeness, integration

---

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid., p. 399.

[46]Ibid., p. 400.

and harmony (form, life instinct). The form is in contrast to the content. The formal aspects of art are an unconscious demonstration of the potential for order to emerge out of chaos: "There can be no aesthetic pleasure without perfect form."[47]

Art must include both the ugly - tension, hatred, depression - and the beautiful - rhythm, wholeness, life. Ugliness of content is mediated by beauty of form. Segal contends that all content is depressive since loss and mourning are the original impetus for reparation through creation.

But what of art whose subject matter is beauty and perfection in the classical sense? She contends that we experience aesthetic pleasure because we can identify with mourning resolved, and that beauty as a subject holds this depressive element as well since it corresponds to the

> state in which our inner world is at peace, ... with no **apparent** signs of ugliness. ... To the sensitive onlooker every work of beauty embodies the terrifying experience of depression and death.[48]

Beauty is difficult to bear, since the peacefulness and perfection is a static element.[49] The unchangeable eternal

---

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid., pp. 401 & 403.

[49]Sacks in Segal in Klein, p. 404.

nature of perfect art, or of beautiful art gives rise to terror since it is the expression of the death instinct itself - stasis is the opposite of life, change and growth.

Adrian Stokes is a writer and painter who developed Kleinian applications to art criticism. Central to his theory of aesthetics is the conception of a work of art as both **a self-sufficient object and a representation of the ego.** The otherness of the object is paramount since separateness and one-ness with the art object is analogous to the primary mother infant relationship which is the

> key to psychical integration ... namely, the sensation of one-ness with the satisfying breast not less than an acceptance of the whole mother as a separate person, as the sum of conflicting attributes.[50]

The art object equally reflects the creator since:

> We are intact only in so far as our objects are intact. Art of whatever kind bears witness to intact objects even when the subject matter is disintegration. Whatever the form of transcript the original conservation or restoration is of the mother's body.[51]

According to Stokes a good work of art is an "entity ... many sided yet harmonious." Art, in its multifacetedness, can encompass the otherwise irreconcilable elements of

---

[50]Adrian Stokes in Klein, et al., New Directions in Psychoanalysis, p. 411.

[51]Stokes in Fuller, p. 116.

oceanic and contained, separate and joined, and, fusion and object otherness. Art can also incorporate love and hate leading Stokes to conclude that the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position, the id and the ego, are involved in the art processes.[52]

The greater the cathexis onto medium the greater the aesthetic experience[53] and therapeutic function of art.

> In a sense the work of art is not a new enactment but re-affirmation of a pre-existent entity. This entity is allowed once more a full and separate life: it is restored.[54]

"Art recreates experience, projects emotional stress."[55] The restorative capacity of the creative process is enhanced by art's potential to encompass opposites and communicate negative emotion benignly.[56] That is, "art is a powerful means for the harmless expression of aggressive trends."[57]

Stokes accepts and modifies the Freudian 'form is content' to "form has a content of its own."[58] He considers the

---

[52]Stokes, p. 407.

[53]Ibid., p. 408.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Ibid., p. 406.

[56]Ibid., p. 409.

[57]Ibid., p. 410.

[58]Ibid.

artistic **process** to be essentially positive and healing **regardless of the content.** The impulse is always reparative; the work of restoring the mother's body, it seems, is never done, and the impulse to do so is never exhausted.

Stokes' differentiation between form and content allows the two positions to co-exist: For example, paranoid-schizoid expressions (splitting, aggression) can be present along with a "reparative nucleus"[59] which may be evident only in the **form.** All art is essentially reparative, or has some reparative, value because the **formal** process is always a constructive rather than a destructive one; that is, as long as an external object is being reconstituted even if the content includes defensive or idealized elements. The art is not expressive exclusively of the depressive position; the individual is seen to be re-working the paranoid-schizoid position as well. For Stokes all art, even idealized art, is about reconstituting and restoring the mother's body and expresses the fusion and attack of the paranoid position as well as the reparation of the depressive position.

---

[59]Fuller, p. 117.

In contrast, Segal, is suspicious of certain kinds of art. She believes that art made in the depressive position is all that Stokes claims it is but that paranoid-schizoid art is escapist and therefore non-aesthetic. Both stress the importance of the externalization of repaired objects but Segal contends that good art can only emanate from the restorative impulse of the depressive position; that defensive and idealized art is non-aesthetic and regressive, belonging to the first position.

For Segal, paranoid-schizoid art, like Freud's 'hysterical acting-out art', is considered to be inferior because its main impetus is escapism, not reparation. Segal differentiates between paranoid schizoid fusion and depressive reconciliation. The latter is the only possible state in which the infant or artist could feel both separate from and joined with the object. Mourning and reparation happen **after** the attack implying a progressive development away from the paranoid-schizoid position. Art created in the former phase would not be truly reparative but a manic defense against it; a denial of loss and the resulting depression. In depressive position art - sounding much like what Stokes describes under his definition of both-position art - there is a balance of elements: A destructive impulse is present with a reparative impulse: "There must be

admission of the original destruction - otherwise, there is no true reparation, but only denial."[60]

In Segal's view, then, there must be ugly (destruction, fragmentation) elements with the beautiful (love, wholeness) elements for the art work to not be defensively "merely pretty."[61] The art work must reflect the conflict even if the final outcome is positive. There also must be room for the viewer to complete the art work within his own imagination (re-create for himself) or for him to identify with the artist's struggle.[62]

To Kleinians, the paranoid-schizoid position is always negative and distorting and is therefore contradictory to a non-psychopathological view of art. Kleinians, including Stokes and Segal, were intent upon developing a psychological theory of aesthetics that saw art-making as a healthy, progressive and even therapeutic activity.[63] That is, art should be understood as a psychic process which reveals mental forces but unconnected with mental illness.

---

[60]Segal in Fuller, p. 118.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid., p. 172.

Whereas Freud often stressed psychopathological motives in the artist, post-Freudians wished to identify and highlight the positive aspects of creativity. Kleinians emphasize the reparative capacity of art. Stokes does this by suggesting that all art has some reparative core. He emphasizes the function of form. Fusion, object-otherness and reparation are the source of the form and the degree to which the artist is able to cathect into the medium determines the aesthetic value of the art.[64] Segal does this by separating art-making into two categories, one healthy, reparative and aesthetic, the other regressive, defensive and non-aesthetic.

Winnicott and Milner

While some Kleinians wished to avoid associating aesthetics and creativity with the paranoid-schizoid position so as not to characterize them as regressive, other analysts, like Winnicott understood this early phase in a more positive light. Winnicott theorizes about the role of the early and primitive drives in creativity[65] using an object relations theory, which, according to Fuller, looked positively upon the primary process and was thus not bound by the limitations of Kleinian psychoanalysis.

---

[64]Stokes in Klein, pp. 407 & 408.

[65]Fuller, p. 172.

Winnicott criticizes Kleinian theory for considering the innate drives irrespective of the actual external interaction between the mother and the child at this crucial stage. The outcome (the individual's later object relations) in Winnicott's account is influenced by the 'environmental provision' or mother's ability to respond to the infant's needs whereas Klein has been criticized for "blaming it all on the child."[66] This refers to her emphasis on the child's aggressive instincts **regardless** of the particular mother-child relationship, evident in the description of introjection and projection above which accents the **subjective** content of object relations. In Klein's view, the way the child **copes** with its own **instinctual** love and hate is pivotal and cannot be significantly influenced by the external world. Her critics have found this, and her concept of the infant's innate envy of the mother's breast,[67] problematic.[68]

Winnicott believes that psychoanalytic explorations of art have mostly succeeded in identifying secondary and tertiary factors. He suggests:

---

[66]Ibid., p. 112.

[67]D. W. Winnicott, The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment, p. 178.

[68]Roazen analyzed it's source to be "personal and 'theoretical' differences with her daughter." Fuller, p. 113.

> Freud used the word 'sublimation' to point the way to a place where cultural experience is meaningful, but perhaps he did not go so far as to tell us where in the mind cultural experience is.[69]

Freud considered pathography to uncover the ultimate basis of creativity by exploring the sexual content that is sublimated in the art. Winnicott suggests that while it is "important and interesting"[70] to, for example, relate Leonardo da Vinci's homosexual tendency to his art, such observations ultimately "by-pass the theme that is at the centre of the idea of creativity."[71] Moreover, pathography tends to irritate artists because it appears to explain why this person was great but inevitably fails because it never acknowledges the most important factor, "the creative impulse itself."[72]

Winnicott suggests that it is unnecessary and probably impossible to explain the creative impulse but it is useful to understand creativity insofar as it makes life meaningful and worth living. Winnicott briefly discusses evolution from this point of view and concludes that culture is not a

---

[69]Winnicott, Playing and Reality, p. 112.

[70]Ibid., p. 81.

[71]Ibid.

[72]Ibid.

never-ending unfolding of the conflict between eros and thanatos (as in Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents) but a progressive development of the conditions which favor creative living.

Winnicott addresses Freud's theory of instinctual gratification, dream and sublimation and wonders if these can help us understand relating, playing and art. He concludes that the concepts of inner and outer (as the places of experience) may not suffice: A third realm is needed to describe play, art and culture. He postulates such an area which **joins and separates inner and outer reality.** The infant **plays** within this **potential** space which exists between the baby and the mother. In Winnicott's theory play is given a central role and provides the model for understanding human experience, including art and culture. Play is considered to be universal and healthy and to facilitate growth and relationships. If something goes wrong in the development of play the result is mental illness and the goal of therapy would be to facilitate its renewed development.

Both inner and outer reality are fixed but the third area, where play and transitional phenomena are experienced,

offers more room to manoeuvre, or "variability."[73] The special feature of this place where play and cultural experience have a position is that **it depends for its existence on living experiences**, not on inherited tendencies.[74]

Because object-relating and play are not primarily instinctually motivated they have been neglected by some psychoanalysts who emphasize gratification and the frustrations, anxieties and defenses formed as a result of drives, according to Winnicott. While Winnicott considers these important, they are not central to "**the experience** of relating to objects."[75] Relating and play are non-climactic yet tremendously intense.[76]

> We now see that it is not instinctual gratifications that makes a baby begin to be, to feel that life is real, to find life worth living ... It is the self that must precede the self's use of instinct.[77]

Winnicott locates art-making within culture along the continuum of the process of 'playing' and relates play and

---

[73]Ibid., p. 125.

[74]Ibid., p. 127.

[75]Ibid., p. 115.

[76]Ibid., p. 116.

[77]Ibid.

art to transitional phenomena, experiences which are not only determined by projections and internal perceptions but by the actual outside world. In the previous section Segal's definition of art-making was presented; it is understood as the attempt to repair the good object, both internal and external. Winnicott contrasts his position with the Kleinian view:

> It is interesting to compare the transitional object concept with Melanie Klein's (1934) concept of the internal object. The transitional object is **not an internal object** (which is a mental concept) - it is a possession. Yet it is not (for the infant) an external object either.[78]

This is the paradox that Winnicott insists must be accepted. Object relations depend on the interaction between the internal object - under the infant's control - and the external object - outside the infant's control although he believes he has created it. The distinction from Kleinian theory is that external reality is considered to have a life of it's own beyond it's internal meaning for the individual. Thus, the environmental provision, the reaction of the external world to the infant, is considered to be as significant a factor in development as what has been introjected to form an internal object that will be projected. Instead of inner and outer, Winnicott

---

[78]Ibid., p. 11.

distinguishes between the subjective object and the object objectively perceived.

Despite theoretical differences, Winnicott appreciates Klein's "recognition of aggressive impulses and destructive fantasy."[79] Klein acknowledged the inherent healthiness of the infant's "fusion of erotic and destructive impulses."[80] Klein's elaboration of the infant's guilt about his own destructiveness and his need to reconstitute the object, which Winnicott likens to Freud's concept of mature ambivalence, is important. However, this does not lead Winnicott to an explanation of creativity based on an impulse to repair the damage effected.

Winnicott's main criticism of Freud and Klein then is their sidestepping of the issue of the environmental provision in favor of concentrating on innate aggression: "The history of an individual baby cannot be written in terms of the baby alone."[81] The environmental provision determines the outcome of the process through which the infant renounces the subjective object and "becomes gradually related to

---

[79]Ibid., p. 82.

[80]Ibid.

[81]Ibid., p. 83.

objects that are objectively perceived."[82]

This necessitates the addition of another concept: The actual environmental provision, and not just the perception of outer reality, is involved in the transition from object **relating** to object **usage**. Object relating is understood as corresponding to the phase in which the infant or adult relates to his own projections. In order for the individual to use the object (to change or grow through a relationship with it) it must be perceived objectively as a thing in itself.[83] If the outer world (mostly the mother) does not ease the infant into a gradual acknowledgment of shared reality then the infant will continue to relate exclusively, instead of partially, to his own projections and will be considered mentally ill.

In Winnicottian terms the development of the reality principle is dependant on the mother's ability to enable the infant's transition from object relating, based on omnipotent illusion, to object usage, based on acceptance of the paradox that the object exists in itself yet feels subjectively to have been created. It is in this context that Winnicott re-appropriates Klein's concept of primary

---

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., p. 104.

aggression. Between object relating and object usage is the necessary destruction of the object. When the infant discovers that the object is not under his omnipotent control he attempts to destroy the object but if the object survives the attack he is relieved and loves the object. It is only if the object survives the attack that the infant can realize the object's otherness and perceive its autonomous qualities (not just the projected qualities).

The result is twofold: The infant begins to live in a world of objects objectively perceived (he **uses** them) and he begins to fantasy. That is, he distinguishes between inner and outer reality so that he can say, "I love you and hate you, I will destroy you without harming you." The individual benefits from this new ability to use objects as long as he can tolerate that he destroys these same beloved objects in his fantasy object-relating.

Thus, Winnicott differs from Freud and Klein, who conceive of relating to external reality through projective identification, in his addition of an objective component indispensable in terms of healthy development, inclusive of environmental provision, and pivotal to an understanding of art. In the Freudian-Kleinian postulation the intrusion of the reality principle angers the infant who lashes out in a bid to destroy the projected persecutor and maintain his

imagined omnipotence, but, according to Winnicott, the destructive impulse facilitates the discovery and acceptance of the object in actuality and therefore of external reality.

For Winnicott then it is unacceptable to say that the baby innately envies the breast: The baby comes to see the breast as external through attempts to destroy it. The baby can only effect real destruction if the outer object fails. If the object survives (does not retaliate) the infant progresses from (1) subjective object-relating to (2) object destruction to (3) objective perception so that "a world of shared reality is created which the subject can use and which can feed back other-than-me substance into the subject."[84]

Winnicott's therapeutic method is based on these principles: He concentrates on the **process of playing** and the transition from object relating (projecting) to object usage where-as Klein is interested in the **play content** which is used to understand the child's instinctual conflicts (love and hate) and libidinal development (including the two positions). Klein equates play with a particular view of communication and language, and interprets it like free-association.

---

[84] Ibid., p. 111.

Winnicott wishes to emphasize "playing as a thing in itself," not referring to something else.[85]

Play connects subjectivity and objectivity; that is, it combines "personal psychic reality and the experience of control of actual objects."[86] and is exciting because of this, not because it is instinctually gratifying. Instincts are involved but instincts are not what play, art and creativity are about. Creativity refers to a special realm of experience, the original being the early infant experience, involving the co-existence of separation and union. To understand art and therapy, one must understand **the use of transitional phenomena and objects within a transitional space.**

> I have introduced the terms 'transitional objects' and 'transitional phenomena' for designation of the intermediate area of experience, between the thumb and the teddy bear, between the oral eroticism and the true object-relationship, between primary creative activity and projection of what has already been introjected, between primary unawareness of indebtedness and the acknowledgement of indebtedness ('Say: "ta"').[87]

---

[85] Ibid., p. 46.

[86] Ibid., p. 55.

[87] Ibid., p. 2.

The transitional object is symbolic of a part-object. Its importance stems from its actuality (it exists physically in the external world) and from "its not being the breast."[88] The infant's pattern of transitional phenomena can begin to be observed at about four to twelve months[89] and may not include the use of an actual object as transitional object. These experiences facilitate the process of discovering (and accepting) the difference between inner and outer, fantasy and fact, and creation and perception. The paradox is experienced by the infant who believes that the object was created by himself and that it is under his control while, at the same time, it existed previously and has a life of its own. The infant's particular relationship to and use of the transitional object reflects his progress on the "journey from the purely subjective to objectivity."[90]

> We experience life in the area of transitional phenomena, in the exciting interweave of subjectivity and objective observation, and in an area that is intermediate between the inner reality of the individual and the shared reality of the world that is external to individuals.[91]

The environmental role here is paramount since unsuccessful weaning or disillusionment can have disastrous results. If

---

[88]Ibid., p. 6.

[89]Ibid., p. 5.

[90]Ibid., p. 7.

[91]Ibid., p. 75.

the paradox is not accepted - if the baby's madness of believing to have created that which already exists continues - the outcome is madness.[92]

> It is assumed here that the task of reality-acceptance is never completed, that no human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality, and that relief from this strain is provided by an intermediate area of experience (cf. Riviere, 1936) which is not challenged (arts, religion, etc.). This intermediate area is in direct continuity with the play area of the small child who is 'lost' in play.[93]

Winnicott summarizes the stages of the infant's relating to the object (whether mother's body or symbolic of mother's body) explaining how the transitional object gets spread out as transitional phenomena "over the whole cultural field" and concludes:

> My subject widens out into that of play, and of artistic creativity and appreciation, and of religious feeling, and of dreaming, and of fetishism, lying and stealing, the origin and loss of affectionate feeling, drug addiction, the talisman of obsessional rituals, etc.[94]

Psychotherapy takes over where the environment fails. The natural developmental process is continued in therapy. The therapeutic method follows the principles of good mothering:

---

[92]Ibid., p. 83.

[93]Ibid., p. 15.

[94]Ibid., p. 6.

> **Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient, and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible, then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play.**[95]

What happens in psychoanalysis or psychotherapy is not only the sophisticated activity devised by Freud but a part of a "natural and universal thing called playing."[96] Playing is always a creative experience and is always precarious since "it is on the theoretical line between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived"[97] The activity of playing is much more than a conveyor of content although the psychotherapist tends to concentrate on this latter. Because playing is a creative experience, it can be therapeutic without interpretation. In fact, interpretation can stifle the therapy of playing if it leads to indoctrination or compliance.

It is not the analyst's ability that is therapeutic for the patient, but his capacity to play. It is the process of playing that is communicative, creative and which enables

---

[95] Ibid., p. 44.

[96] Ibid., p. 48.

[97] Ibid., p. 59.

the individual to discover his self, not the product of the play.

> I am suggesting that the search for the self in terms of what can be done with waste products is a search that is doomed to be never-ending and essentially unsuccessful.[98]

The product may be valuable, for example as art, but the self is not to be found in the product, but in the experience of the process of making or viewing.

> If the artist (in whatever medium) is searching for the self then it can be said that in all probability there is already some failure for that artist in the field of general creative living. The finished creation never heals the underlying lack of sense of self.[99]

Thus, the self can be found only in the process of play, art, therapy and creativity, not in the product. Similarly, a patient does not need an explanation, but an experience.

The therapeutic process must be relaxed, non-purposive and formless. This requires trust. The mother, the first outer object related to by the infant, (and, later, the therapist) must be reliable and trustworthy if there is to be a potential space between herself and the baby: The therapeutic procedure, according to Winnicott, is to allow

---

[98] Ibid., p. 64.

[99] Ibid.

for "formless experience, and for creative impulses, motor and sensory, which are the stuff of playing."[100]

> Free association that reveals a coherent theme is already affected by anxiety and the cohesion of ideas is a defense.[101]

Opportunities for relaxation can be missed if the therapist attempts to impose purpose where "nonsense is".[102] This represents "a failure of the environmental provision"[103] and results in diminished trust.

Creativity, in the sense meant by Winnicott, is an "attitude to external reality,"[104] not a reference to qualities in a creative product. Creativity is a healthy state in which the individual feels that life is worth living. In contrast, compliance makes the individual feel that life is futile.[105]

> The creative impulse is therefore something that can be looked at as a thing in itself, something that of course is necessary if an artist is to produce a work of art, but also as something that is present when **anyone** - baby, child, adolescent, adult, old man or woman - looks in a healthy way at anything or does anything deliberately, such as making a mess with faeces or

---

[100] Ibid., p. 65.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid., p. 76.

[105] Ibid.

> prolonging the act of crying to enjoy a musical sound.[106]

Thus, art object and cultural phenomena and play are all symbolic of the relationship between the baby and the mother. The art object symbolizes their union (it is the creation-illusion of the artist-infant) and their separation (it exists in reality, is independent and is not a hallucination). Yet "separation in separating does not arise" because they are joined by the potential space.[107] In this third realm,

> in the potential space between the baby and the mother there appears the creative playing that arises out of the relaxed state; it is here that there develops a use of symbols that stand at one and the same time for external world phenomena and for phenomena of the individual person.[108]

Separation is avoided since the potential space is filled with symbols; it is a creative process that involves the healthy person throughout his life, called culture. Cultural experience including art is an extension of transitional phenomena and play.[109] They all happen within the same transitional space.

---

[106] Ibid., p. 80.

[107] Ibid., p. 127.

[108] Ibid., p. 128.

[109] Ibid., p. 116.

Marion Milner describes the creative experience first hand in On Not Being Able to Paint. The book chronicles Milner's own discovery of forces other that those which are intentional or learned that affect the creative processes. Milner describes, not how she expresses herself through art, but how she **experiences** her relationship to the outside world through the marks.[110]

One of Milner's findings is that technique is unsatisfying if it separates the artist from the object. For example, the 'correct' perspective can actually get in the way of expressing what is important. Milner came to understand that the formal aspects of painting are very significant psychologically. For example, space in a painting can stir up feelings from the earlier experience of being an infant reaching for mother's arms; the space separates and connects the infant with the source of his gratifications.

The unconscious does not cling to a distinction between self and other and can therefore do what the logical conscious mind cannot. The unconscious functions according to the primary process which is more sensitive to sameness than to difference and is governed by passion and intuition. The

---

[110]Ibid., p. 173.

primary process not only connects us to the imaginary but helps us understand the real.

In Eternity's Sunrise Marion Milner describes her own version of primary process attention, calling it the Answering Activity and describing it as a full body experience. It has mystical, religious connotations (for example she calls free association 'praying' and 'meditating') and is similar to connecting with the internal object except that it is "an active 'something' that is both 'I' and 'not I'."[111]

Milner, like Winnicott, is not satisfied with an instinctual explanation for such phenomena. She believes that internal contact with the primary object does not get its appeal from auto-eroticism nor narcissism, nor is it separate from external reality. While both she and Winnicott appreciate the role of the conflicting love and hate instincts, they suggest that creativity, object relations, culture, religion and art indicate the presence of something other, that has yet to be addressed adequately by psychoanalysis.

Milner does not separate inner and outer, as in the Kleinian internal object which is subjective material (inner) that

---

[111]Milner, Eternity's Sunrise, p. 50.

can be externally projected (outer); for Milner, **to contact the inner is to contact the outer.** She describes a creative experience that she had as "a different kind of contact with something inside, and one which in fact, paradoxically, brought a richer contact with the outside as well."[112]

The 'opposing' instincts are considered to be similarly interconnected. For example, Winnicott points out the necessity of aggression (the adolescent must 'kill' the parents to become adult[113]) in healthy object relations while Milner describes the function of death, nothingness and darkness in creativity; stasis is a phase in the fertility cycle.[114]

The acceptance of the Winnicottian paradox leads to many modifications within psychoanalytic theory. Another example is the concept of symbolism which no longer stands for an instinctual sublimation (Freud) or an attempt at reparation (Klein). For Winnicott and Milner the symbol is not a **re-creation** of something inner (carried to the outside by the symbol) but a **creation** of something new within the

---

[112] Ibid., p. 31.

[113] Winnicott, Playing and Reality, p. 170.

[114] Milner, op cit, p. 38.

transitional space; that is, something which entails "the perceiving of new inner horizons as well as outer ones."[115]

> So there's an 'other' within that is not just the Freudian repressed unconscious, but an UN-conscious [sic] which is yet far more conscious, this answering activity which is both 'I and not I'.[116]

And, these wide focus experiences are:

> The kind of attentions which alone can encompass the contraries, hold together the dark and the light, the love and the hate, the unity and the separateness, the joy and the woe. And only so can they create something new which is a resolution of their contradictions and therefore a true progression. But I had also found this time that the wide focus had another aspect, a feeling oneself out into the other which included a spreading of something of one's own substance to take on the form of what one was looking at.[117]

In her foreword to Marion Milner's On Not Being Able to Paint Anna Freud, an ego-psychologist, makes several revealing observations. Milner offers a new perspective on creativity and approaches art, not by studying the genius artist as analysts in the past have done, but through her own amateur efforts. Milner draws a parallel between this process (the development of artistic expression) and therapy, in which one must overcome resistances, learn to

---

[115] Ibid., p. 30.

[116] Ibid., p. 150.

[117] Ibid., p. 159.

free associate, and get in touch with deep psychic material. She explores many similarities between the creative process and the therapeutic process. For example, she documents how she sometimes ended up drawing exactly the opposite of her intention,[118] like parapraxes, and investigated why this happens in art.

Art and therapy both require "circumstances in which it is safe to be absent-minded"[119] and courage to face the unknown and to accept chaos. If the analysand or painter cannot tolerate uncertainty then he rushes in too soon to define boundaries (draws outlines or prematurely interprets). However if the anxiety is tolerated then a new form and content emerge. In analysis "the inner experience of formerly unknown affects and impulses"[120] allows for the development of ego-processes. In art the unknown finds its way into the art work through the formal use of the medium. And finally:

> With regard to the analytic controversy whether psychic creativity seeks above all 'to preserve, re-create the lost object', the author takes the stand that this function of art, although present, is a secondary one. According to her, the artist's fundamental activity goes beyond the re-creation of the lost object to the primary aim of 'creating

---

[118] Marion Milner, On Not Being Able to Paint, p. 8.

[119] Ibid., p. xiii.

[120] Anna Freud in Milner, p. xiv.

> what has never been' by means of a newly acquired power of perception.[121]

This is also analogous to analytic therapy in which change is sought and new attitudes are created.

In the chapter "Being Separate and Being Together" Milner explores an aspect of creativity that is central to object relations. The experience of drawing felt like a "retreat from the responsibilities of being a separate person" which was an essential step, "a going backwards" to search for something.[122]

> It seemed one might want some kind of relation to objects in which one was much more mixed up with them than that [than objective detachment and observation].[123]

Milner discovered that space in art is related to the artist's experience of being a separate body related to other bodies.[124] For example, the consideration of space in a composition necessitates "facing certain facts about oneself as a separate being."[125] This perceptual activity involves using imagination to see the truth. This relates

---

[121]Ibid., p. xiv.

[122]Ibid., p. 10.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Ibid., p. 12.

[125]Ibid., p. 13.

again to Winnicott's paradox, that the perception of external reality requires imaginative apperception; illusion, according to Milner, as opposed to delusion. But the perception of truth through illusion holds certain "spiritual dangers."[126]

Following this line of investigation Milner concludes that the outline is a construct which protects one from the fear of merging and losing one's self in the object, similar to Winnicott's concept of madness allowable to the infant. This fear leads to the defensive activity of placing boundaries between

> the tangible realities of the external world and the imaginative realities of the inner world of feeling and idea; in fact, a fear of being mad.[127]

Milner argues that such a stance may protect one from the world of imagination but also impedes the "wide focus of attention"[128] described in the long quote on page 134. Again, all this defensiveness seemed associated with the fear of being related to others; that is, with the fear of losing oneself through connecting with outer objects. And yet, the reality of outer objects and connection with them

---

[126]Ibid., p. 14.

[127]Ibid., p. 17.

[128]Ibid., p. 16.

seemed to be just that which individuals search for. Milner likens the discovery of the "living essences" of outer objects and the delight they bring "simply through the fact of being themselves" to falling in love.[129]

Milner describes the therapeutic aspect of the aesthetic experience. A meeting of consciousness and blindness is possible from which springs "a new and vital whole between them" without rigid boundaries, "a changing world [which] seemed nearer the true quality of experience."[130] However this process, whether in art or human relationships, requires an acceptance of mergence between states of being and between self and other.

Milner quotes Cezanne who said, "One becomes the painting."[131] Not only art-making, but perception and relating require "the necessity of illusion"[132] which is accomplished through imagination. Milner uses the arguments of the philosopher Santayana to show how perception is "acquired by a dream"[133]; that is, from our first perceptual experiences when we did not know "the difference between

---

[129]Ibid., p. 21.

[130]Ibid., p. 24.

[131]Ibid., p. 25.

[132]Ibid., p. 31.

[133]Santayana in Milner, p. 26.

thoughts and things."[134] Somehow we discover that our dreams actually correspond to "reality outside ourselves" and naturally hunger for this contact again.[135] The inner and outer are thus so linked that "without our own contribution we see nothing"[136] and this contribution comes from "what we have made within us out of all past relationships with what is outside, whether they were realized as past relationships or not."[137]

Art and object relations continue that "primary phase of experience"[138] in which "inner dream and outer perception"[139] are one. Milner then goes on to show how the mechanisms discovered in psychoanalysis (denial, reversal) and which relate to one's experience of the world are the same internal mechanisms involved in painting and how the artistic process allows an intuitive kind of thinking to develop, a "contemplative action."[140]

---

[134]Ibid., p. 27.

[135]Ibid.

[136]Ibid.

[137]Ibid., p. 28.

[138]Ibid.

[139]Ibid.

[140]Ibid., p. 153.

The therapeutic experience in which the inner and outer are connected is not readily available to everyone. The dangers involved in imagination lead many to live according to reassuring literal reality which entails the sacrifice of whole areas of experience and the ultimate distortion of the outer reality they rely on.

> What they are essentially in need of is a setting in which it is safe to indulge in reverie, safe to permit a con-fusion of 'me' and 'not-me'. Such a setting, in which it is safe to indulge in reverie, is provided for the patient in analysis, and painting likewise provides such a setting, both for the painter of the picture and for the person who looks at it.[141]

Thus, we have surveyed Freud's theories on art and the contributions made to an understanding of creativity by psychoanalytic aesthetics and object relations theory to arrive at Milner who links the artistic and therapeutic processes.

---

[141] Ibid., p. 165.

CONCLUSION

Freud's ideas on art and, in particular his theory of artistic sublimation, were described in the first two chapters of this thesis. This was followed by two chapters on other writers who extend or modify Freud's original views: Chapter Three featured writers who contribute towards the formulation of a psychoanalytic aesthetic and the fourth and final chapter reviewed object relations theory, culminating in Milner's assertion that art is therapeutic. Art therapists, for their part, claim Freudian ancestry.[1] In Judith Rubin's Approaches to Art Therapy (1987) the majority of writers describe a psychoanalytic art therapy.

As mentioned in Chapter One, Freud thought of artists as "people who have no occasion to submit their inner life to the strict control of reason."[2] While Freud praised the insight of the artist he also once stated that it was not "really comparable to the rational understanding of the psychoanalyst."[3] To which category belongs the artist as

---

[1]Ulman, Elinor: "Variations on a Freudian Theme: Three Art Therapy Theorists," American Journal of Art Therapy, Vol 24, May, 1986, p. 125.

[2]Freud in Spector, p. 33.

[3]Ibid., p. 78.

therapist? Freud did not go as far as Hyman who claimed that "all artists are analysts."[4]

Freud never specifically referred to art as therapeutic but he painstakingly explored the relationship between art and the unconscious. The therapeutic potential of art is suggested in Freud's theory of sublimation in which art-making is considered to be an ingenious way of transforming instinctual fantasy thereby coping with reality. According to Freud, artistic sublimation is culturally useful, not only because it staves off neurosis in the would-be neurotic artist, but because it enables the artist to communicate fantasy and reality in a new way that is valuable to himself and the viewer.[5]

Ricoeur states that, according to Freud, the work of life is resignation and this is not aesthetic. However:

> If art cannot take the place of wisdom, it does lead to it in its own way ... the symbolic mode proper to the work of art enables us to endure the harshness of life, and, suspended between illusion and reality, helps us love fate.[6]

Thus, Ricoeur interprets Freud in such a way that we are brought closer to a conception of art as therapeutic in its

---

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 110.

[6]Ricoeur, p. 335.

ability to aid in the resignation to the reality principle (see page 84).

Other psychoanalysts after Freud have restated his ideas more directly in terms of a therapeutic potential of art. For example, Storr contends that art is therapeutic,

> partly because ... creative work tends to protect the individual against mental breakdown; and partly because the acquisition of the skills required to practice an art, or to transmute an original idea into comprehensible form, demands a 'strong ego', that is an actively executant aspect of personality.[7]

But Winnicott and Milner go even further. Winnicott conceives of a creative impulse in itself; that is, not as a corollary of the life and death instincts (see pages 116, 123, and 124). Milner directly addresses the overlap between the therapeutic and artistic processes (see pages 135 and 139). This overlap is the foundation of art therapy.

As an art therapy student developing clinical skills I became more aware of how complex the process of art therapy is and more curious about how it might be described. In the art therapy literature I found insightful clinical writing with limited theoretical exegesis. I turned to Freudian

---

[7]Storr, p. 51.

psychoanalysis because it addresses in depth issues which I believe to be central to art therapy. In psychoanalysis there is a therapeutic relationship, in psychoanalytic aesthetics there is a relationship to an art work and in psychodynamic art therapy there is both. I find the psychoanalytic literature relevant to an understanding of the therapeutic and artistic processes and appreciate the development on Freud's ideas by Ricoeur, Winnicott, Milner and others. Their contributions have enabled me to begin to develop a greater theoretical understanding of art therapy practice.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Freud, Sigmund: The Interpretation of Dreams, Science Editions, Inc., New York, 1961.

_____: A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, Pocket Books, New York, 1972.

_____: Civilization and its Discontents, The Hogarth Press, London, 1975.

Fuller, Peter: Art and Psychoanalysis, Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, London, 1980.

Gedo, Mary Mathews: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Art, The Analytic Press, New Jersey, 1985.

Grünbaum, Adolf: The Foundations of Psychoanalysis, A Philosophical Critique, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1984.

Hall, Calvin S.: A Primer of Freudian Psychology, New American Library, New York, 1979.

Hofstadter, Albert and Richard Kuhns: Philosophies of Art and Beauty, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1964.

Klein, Melanie et al: New Directions In Psychoanalysis, Tavistock Press, London, 1955.

Kramer, Edith: Art as Therapy With Children, Schocken Books, New York, 1971.

Kreitler, Hans and Shulamith Kreitler: Psychology of the Arts, Duke University Press, Durham, 1972.

Kris, Ernst: Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art, International University Press, 1952.

_____ and Otto Kurz: Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist, Yale University Press, 1979.

Kuhns, Richard: Psychoanalytic Theory of Art, Columbia University Press, New York, 1983.

Milner, Marion: On Not Being Able to Paint, International University Press, New York, 1957.

_____: Eternity's Sunrise, Virago Press Limited, London, 1987.

Naumburg, Margaret: An Introduction to Art Therapy, Teachers College Press, New York, 1973.

Rank, Otto: Art and Artist, Agathon Press, New York, 1968.

Ricoeur, Paul: Freud and Philosophy, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1970.

Rose, Gilbert J.: The Power of Form, International Universities Press, Inc., New York, 1980.

Rubin, Judith: Approaches to Art Therapy, Brunner/Mazel, New York, 1987.

Segal, Hanna: "A Psychoanalytic Approach to Aesthetics", in Melanie Klein et al, New Directions in Psychoanalysis, Tavistock Press, London, 1955.

Spector, Jack J.: The Aesthetics of Freud, Praeger Publications, New York, 1972.

Spitz, Ellen Handler: Art and Psyche, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985.

Stokes, Adrian: "Form in Art" in Melanie Klein et al, New Directions in Psychoanalysis, Tavistock Press, London, 1955.

Storr, Anthony: The Dynamics of Creation, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1972.

Ulman, Elinor: "Variations on a Freudian Theme: Three Art Therapy Theorists," American Journal of Art Therapy, vol 24, 1986.

Wilmington, Susanna: Book Review in The Arts in Psychotherapy, vol 13, 354-355, 1986.

Winnicott, D.W., Playing and Reality, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1971.

_____: The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment, Hogarth Press, London, 1965.

Wollheim, Richard: Freud: A Collection of Critical Essays, Anchor Books, New York, 1974.