תוכן העניינים

דבר העורכת

שלומית ידלין־גדות

לאחר "השבת השחורה" ובמהלך מלחמת השבעה באוקטובר נאמר ונכתב רבות על אזור ה"אין־שפה",[1] על ליבת הטראומה הלא־מיוצגת, על הממשי הדחוס ששוכן לפני המילה ומעבר לה. בגיליון הנוכחי, ללא תיאום ותכנון, רבים מהכותבים שואפים לסלול נתיבים לכובד המעובה שמותירה מילה שנשמטה, שלא נמצאה או טרם הומצאה. הנתיבים הללו נעים לעבר חקירה של דימויים ויזואליים, נגיעה בצלילים והתבוננות בחישה. בשנה השנייה לעבודתם עם נפגעי גוף ונפש מהטבח ומהמלחמה, מתמידים אנשי בריאות הנפש בניסיונם לחבור לחתכים מדממים, לתהומות ההלם, האובדן והגעגוע. רישומי חישה, מראות וצלילים נאספו ביד חומלת וניסוחם מפלס בעמל דרך במעבי הבלתי נתפס.

פרויד הבחין כבר בפרויקט לפסיכולוגיה מדעית בין ייצוגים מודעים לייצוגים לא־מודעים.[2] הייצוג הלא־מודע, "ייצוג דבר", הוא המקבילה המנטלית הרפויה והמחוררת למושא הזיכרון. הוא נוצר כתרכובת של רישומי ריח, צליל ומראה של המושא וממדיו השונים נעים מעבר למעגלים אסוציאטיביים. ייצוגי הדבר הם אבני הבניין של חלומות, פנטזיה וזיכרונות מסך ותפוסים בגולמיות רישומיו של הגוף החווה. רק בעת החבירה לייצוג

---

1 כהן־פריד, ע׳ (2023). *שפת האין שפה של הטראומה: מחשבות על עדות של ה"שבת השחורה"*, **בטיפולנט**, 29.11.2023, https://www.betipulnet.co.il/particles/mutism_and testimony_ paradox.

2 S. Freud ([1895] 1950a). "Project for a Scientific Psychology", S.E., vol. 1: 364.

מילה הופך ייצוג הדבר למודע ויכול לחבור לתהליכים המשניים ולעיבוד. כך במאמרים שחוקרים רישום, פיסול, קעקוע ודימויים ויזואליים, מונכחים ייצוגי הדבר מבעד לייצוגי המילה ברקמת שתי וערב. מתוך הרקמה המתהווה נחקרת תנועת ההתמרה מהמודר שאי־אפשר לעכלו לכיוון אופק של ריפוי ותיקון. התנועה הזאת מתממשת בתפר שבין המטפל למטופל, בין הפנים לחוץ, בין הביתי לאלביתי, בין הקירות הנופלים, בהשראת התקווה לכינון מחודש של הבית.

שנה של המתנה דרוכה עברה בין פרסומו של גיליון זה לגיליון שקדם לו והתגלה המאמץ הנפשי האדיר שנדרש להמתנה; המתנה מתמידה ועיקשת שאיננה מסירה מבט ולו לרגע ממושא הציפייה. החטופים החיים חזרו הביתה, ומאיתנו – ביתם – נמנעה סכנת האסון הנורא, הבלתי הפיך, של הפקרתם. תודה לכותבים שתרמו מכישרונותיהם כדי לסמן איי מנוח בעבודת ההמתנה הזאת, שפרטו את המושג "מנוח" כרעיון וכפרקטיקה ומתחו קווי רגיעה מהמנוחה ועד לסימונו של המת בשיח. סביב האיים ובין הקווים ההמתנה נמשכת. עד החטוף האחרון.

CONTENTS

"THE STILL-TENDER MEMORY OF CHILDHOOD": SIGMUND FREUD AND WALTER BENJAMIN ON IMAGES OF CHILDHOOD

ANAT TZUR MAHALEL

The present paper offers a discussion on the subject of a particular group of childhood memories that embody a return to infantile experience both in content and in form, mainly comprised of visual images. Images of childhood, in the literal as opposed to metaphoric sense, play a pivotal role in the writings of both Sigmund Freud and Walter Benjamin. Freud's visual image (*visuelles Bild*) and Walter Benjamin's *Denkbild* (thought-image) can be seen as presenting a dialectic between a condensed experience of the past and the inevitable transformation of sensory experience into language. In our psychoanalytic work, childhood memories are not necessarily retrieved as realistic events, but rather embody the potential to create new experiences in the present of remembrance, which are merely referred to as having "taken place" in the past.

These notions are examined through a close psychoanalytic reading of Benjamin's *Berliner Kindheit um Neunzehnhundert* (*Berlin Childhood Around 1900*) (2002 [1938]). This memoir was fitfully constructed between 1932 and 1938, across numerous insertions and deletions, containing the singular collection of *Denkbilder,* thought images that present the experience of being a child in the city of Berlin around 1900. The text itself consists of thirty fragments which, all told, share features of autobiography, prose poetry, and scathing socio-critical historical study, each one attached to some minor association or fragmented thought. Benjamin recalls various places, objects, and events in Berlin, creating "images that reflect the perception of the big city as a child from a bourgeois family." The book offers a requiem on behalf of his assimilated Jewish generation for the crises that surrounded them from World War I until the rise of the Nazi regime. The present reading will focus on three main themes: replacements for the original in modern society, images of childhood as prefigurations of later developments, and the translation

from images to words as a vital transitional process, especially in times of turmoil.

Childhood is a time of experiencing and exploring the world, both the external and the internal world (Freud, 1938, pp. 195-206). Images of childhood are constructed from memories and impressions that have been collected not only in childhood but also in various other historical phases—often recharged retroactively, as Freud taught us—and that have been gradually condensed together and woven into a dynamic matrix of images (in German, the word *Bild* can mean both an image and a picture). Recalling memories of childhood challenges the individual to regress to those infantile processing stages, in terms of cognitive and emotional development, while simultaneously remaining in touch with contemporary ("present"), mature levels of processing. Seeing events through the eyes of the child we once were means retrieving past events, including the context in which they occurred, the emotional atmosphere they continue to convey, and the subjective interpretative force they impose. Moreover, due to the distinct way the mind tends to process and analyze information in childhood compared to later periods of life, retrieving childhood memories means retrieving events not only under the aspect of content, but also under that of form primarily in terms of image-like or pictorial pre-thought. The specific selection of memories from childhood gradually constructs the individual's story and personal history.

In his watershed 1899 paper, "Screen memories," and already hinted to in his *Project* (1895)*,* Freud discusses the characteristics of childhood scenes, emphasizing their pivotal visual aspect. He contended that childhood scenes are essentially remembered as pictures of a distinct kind. The task of continuously knowing reality, from that point of view, is not so much a process of greeting the new as it is a process of "translating back" incoming data to our early languages of knowing and experiencing. Childhood memories tend to be recollected in visual form, like the language of dreams: "In the case of childhood memories: they are plastically visual even in people whose later function of memory has to do without any visual element. Visual memory accordingly preserves the type of infantile memory" (Freud, 1901, p. 46). The perceptual-emotional information gathered in relation to past events is gradually integrated with the multilayered language used by the psyche at the time of remembrance, in particular the archaic language of the unconscious that leans on "plastic and visual form."

Freud argues that it is not infantile memory that preserves images of childhood, but rather images of childhood preserve infantile memory. The retrieval of early experiences is inherently obscure and partial. The singular path to childhood experience leads through the process of translating back into an early form of experience, one that leans on the sensual and, most emphatically, on the visual. Thus, the remembrance of childhood leans on figurative processing of the catalogue of images rising from the unconscious, as we let go of the need to seek cause-and-effect relations.

In the case of early trauma that cannot be recollected or remembered as such, memory traces of the traumatic event take the form of mnemic visual traces. Freud stated that this process of recollection does not singularly characterize traumatic events but, in fact, characterizes memories of childhood in general—"the raw material of memory-traces out of which it was forged remains unknown to us in its original form" (Freud, 1899, p. 322). According to Freud, memories of childhood are memories that are actively recreated in the present time of remembrance, perhaps even newly formed, affected by the state of mind at the time of remembrance, and merely referred to as "of the past." The quality of early memories is similar to the quality of dreams. They both arise from their relatively close connection to sensory experience, most prominently in the visual images that they offer. Both early memories and dreams are kept alive through the distinct meta-language of visual images that capture a rich matrix of condensed experiences.

Following Freud's conception of early memories and dreams, Walter Benjamin's idea of dialectical image refers to a distinct set of meanings that is not submitted to a simple obvious interpretation. It is an image or set of images that is created in the dialectic between dreaming and awakening and between the inability to present experience in language and the inevitability of this transformation. Benjamin, in his thoughts on history and memory, created the concept of the dialectical image to present the remembered event as an image in which the past is created as a new experience in the present: the "then" becomes "now" in the flashing moment (*blitzhaft*) of awakening (*das Erwachen*). Benjamin constructs an innovative conception of historical time based on the relationship between the "then" and the "now" (more than the past and the present), as brought together in images. The dialectical image, and the literary form of the *Denkbild*, are presented as a constellation, a construction whose essence lies more in its spatial configuration than in the specific content of its elements. The dialectical image is thus created at a point at which something erupts, interrupts, or breaks into the flow of

consciousness. Instead of clarifying a thought by means of an image in linear fashion, the *Denkbild* presents an image of an integral, albeit not immediately recognizable component of thought. Neither the image nor the thought is clear without the other, and insight into their relation is arrived at through a process of reflection on the apparent incongruence between them (Tzur Mahalel 2023).

It has been argued that Benjamin's text, constructed like a mosaic from short pieces of prose, consists not so much of historical documents as prefigurations or prophecies projected backwards. In his fortieth year, Benjamin sought to locate the seeds of the destruction that was soon to bring the nineteenth-century world to a cataclysmic end in war. In this text, Benjamin is concerned less with portraying his own personal development than with depicting the social construction of an individual growing up among the Jewish haute bourgeoisie before the turn of the century. The language of images that unfolds in the memoir offers a rich matrix of the impending tragedy—both personal and cultural—alongside cryptic messages that might have foretold this singular future. In a sense, the text embodies a process of double mourning: mourning for his childhood as a melancholic adult and mourning for his city of birth as an exile. In this double mourning, Benjamin presents his origins and childhood as living relics of lost times. The fact that Benjamin was writing this childhood memoir as the atrocities of war were closing in on him gives his prognostications a tragic tone. With this text, he is constructing not only a personal history but also a history of his generation. The writings of the Jewish intellectuals of that time, among them Freud and Benjamin, stand as historic testimonies to this dramatic rise and tragic fall.

Every text is both a distinct and individual creation and a hieroglyph of all texts. According to Benjamin, this is the reason why writing embodies a translation that will always involve memory, remembrance, and mourning. This emerges not only from the content-oriented aspect of memories (the "what"), but also because, by the very act of writing, one engages with the sensory dimension of the textual and linguistic, which inevitably involves the historical and the eternal. Every writing is an act of striving toward that ultimately ineffable "something else" that Freud referred to (1938, p. 196), distinct from any defined space or time, from any defined communication, pushing toward the horizons of the unknown. As Freud writes: "Concerning the factors of silence, solitude and darkness, we can only say that they are actually elements in the production of the infantile anxiety from which

the majority of human beings have never become quite free" (1919, p. 252).

THE ETHICS OF MEMORY AND FORGETTING

ORIT YUSHINSKY

In this article I explore the ethical implications of memory and forgetting from a psychoanalytic perspective rooted in the thought of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. My intent is to challenge many of the dominant discourses that treat memory as a static repository of events and positions and to criticize the view that remembrance is a moral imperative often tied to collective identity and national mythologies. Beyond this critique, the essay proposes a revised dynamic and ethical approach to the function of remembering and forgetting.

Drawing initially on the Freudian understanding of the unconscious as timeless and yet as structured as a kind of historical palimpsest, I concur with the view that memory is never simply a passive imprint of past events. Rather, it is an active, interpretive process, shaped by the subject through unconscious selection, repression and symbolic elaboration. The past is always already registered as meaning, and the subject is always implicated in the way that meaning is formed—even in traumatic experiences that are suffered without conscious awareness. Memory, therefore, is inherently contingent, and this contingency opens a space for potential ethical engagement; specifically, the possibility of taking responsibility for one's relation to the past.

Through Lacan's reformulation of Freud, I examine the topological, rather than the simply binary relation between the subject and the Other—re-understood as both the Big Other of the symbolic order (language, norms, culture), as another subject, and as the social collective. The unconscious, as Lacan insists, is "structured like a language" and is always already mediated by signifiers inherited from the Other. These signifiers shape both personal and collective memory, embedding ideological and affective residues that guide behavior and subjectivity. Yet, as Lacan himself emphasizes, no signifier can fully capture the subject; there remains a gap, a slippage, a space whose meaning and function can be defined by many factors, including that of ethical freedom.

This space allows for the possibility of change. If memory is viewed as not fixed, and if its form is always already interpretive and symbolically

mediated, then there is room for the subject and the collective to revisit and reconfigure the narratives that define them. The article is a critique of the collective compulsion to repeat painful memories in the name of justice or identity, particularly in contexts saturated with national trauma and political mythologies or interests. I propose instead an ethics of memory grounded in the analytic principles of working-through, mourning, and responsibility.

A central example is the contemporary Israeli imperative to remember (deeply rooted in the history of Jewish/biblical religious obligations to commit certain central historical events to memory)—beginning with Zionist memory debts based on 18th and early 19th European pogroms, Holocaust memorialization and contemporary slogans such as "Never forget, never forgive!," revived in the new context of the recent massacre of October 7, 2023. I argue that such imperatives tend to solidify trauma, foreclose critical reflection and reinforce cycles of vengeance. Drawing on Vamik Volkan's concept of "chosen trauma," from his extensive work on unresolved mourning and various tragic scenes of war and atrocities, my article demonstrates how collective identity can be formed around unprocessed representations of historical injury, passed down through generations as unconscious mandates for an almost automatic national loyalty, grievance and retribution. This mechanism enforces identification with the position of the victim, while authorizing the displacement of violence onto others deemed "the enemy," or, of specific meaning in the Israeli/Jewish context, "Amalek."

By contrast, the psychoanalytic discourse offers another path. Mourning, as opposed to vengeance or fetishistic repetition, allows the subject and the group to integrate loss without idealizing or denying it. It opens the possibility of acknowledging the irreversibility of loss while also creating space for symbolic reconfiguration and ethical action. This is not a call to forget in the sense of denial or repression; rather, it is a call to forget the mythical fixations that reduce the past to a closed narrative and render the future impossible.

In dialogue with thinkers such as Walter Benjamin, specifically with his 1942 book *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, the article proposes that redemption lies not in a full revelation of the past but in the subject's or the collective's active participation in shaping its meaning. For example, Benjamin's notion of "a weak messianic power" is read as an ethical imperative to assume responsibility for the contingent nature of historical meaning, following both Marxist historical materialism and various psychoanalytic insights, rather than submit to deterministic mythologies. The subject's freedom lies in this responsibility: to intervene in the symbolic fabric of memory, to choose

what to carry forward and what to leave behind, and to refuse the seamless reproduction of trauma as if it were fate.

The ethics of memory and forgetting proposed here insists on the subject's capacity to do something beneficial and valuable with the contingent signifiers that mark her history, even when she did not choose the circumstances in which they were inscribed. This capacity is both personal and political. When extended to the collective, it invites the possibility of historical transformation — of shifting from a mythical repetition of trauma and victimhood toward the construction of a shared future no longer governed by vengeance and historical deadlock. Psychoanalysis, in my reading, offers such a "weak messianic" intervention: the practice of listening and *bien-dire* ("speaking well"), of loosening the grip of the master's discourse (Lacan), the discourse of compelling social norms, and of re-opening the past as a space for ethical invention rather than political command.

LIVING AFTER DEATH: FROM MELANCHOLIC DEADLOCK TO SYMBOLIC CONTINUITY

MERAV ROTH

This essay is situated within clinical psychoanalysis in dialogue with trauma studies, cultural hermeneutics, and Jewish textual traditions, asking how a subject might yet live after death: not by denying finitude, but by translating concrete loss into symbolic immortality. I put in place two anchors to orient the argument: Freud's distinctions among mourning, melancholia, and the experience of the *unheimlich* (1917, 1919, 1920), and Robert Jay Lifton's (1973) account of symbolic immortality as culturally sanctioned traditions of continuity beyond death. Against this frame, I advance three reparative vectors—creativity, spirit, and belonging—that help enable a shift from mortifying dead ends or deadlocks to a vital form of mourning that reopens meaning and continuity.

I begin by clarifying terms. Mourning denotes a painful consent to reality; melancholia installs the lost object inside the ego, binding the subject to a mortifying identification (Freud, 1917). Traumatic loss intensifies compulsive repetition and risks a collapse of symbolization (Felman & Laub, 1998). Lifton proposes that human beings counterbalance finitude through a sense of "felt continuity," placing an emphasis on connection with offspring and lineage, spirit, creativity, nature and experiential transcendence. I take up these pathways selectively. The vitality of a sense of continuity does not, of course, abolish death, but rather relocated it more proportionately within networks of meaning that stretch across time.

Against this background, I sketch three forms of the melancholic pole, where refusals of finitude paradoxically cling to death—I term this "melancholic immortality." One form is an addiction to near death: the subject refuses loss by living as if dead, caught in compulsive returns to the traumatic scene. Betty Joseph's (1982) notion of an addiction to near death shows how such states are projected into the analyst, recruiting him/her into a shared sense of hopeless despair. A second form *imitates* lifelessness: the bereaved petrify into living monuments, a loyalty that suffocates both survivor and memory. Here, therapeutic work turns on metabolizing survivor guilt and loosening negative

narcissism (Green, 2002) into what I view as a "duty of survivors," that is, to relinquish what cannot be changed (death) and assume responsibility for what can (life).

A third, most violent form of melancholia erupts at the group level as a "Mephistophelean solidarity" (Roth, 2024): ecstatic fusion with destructive power offering a counterfeit eternity through murderous attacks. Crowd psychology (Le Bon, 1895/1920) and Freud's *Group Psychology* (1921) explain how such fusion suspends shame and also rational thought; the ethical counter-move is to mourn every innocent life and to guard the symbolic space where human meaning can breathe.

The essay then turns toward 3 reparative continuities that can lead to a psychological experience of symbolic immortality. *Creativity* comes first. Cultural productivity converts concrete death, and obsessions over death, into the capacity to witness and repair. Jorge Semprún (1994, p. 151) names the task without adornment: to "invent life by means of all this death." In Hanna Segal's (1986) terms, creation re-creates a beloved inner world that has been shattered, by way of stitching fragments together, by breathing life into blockaded, dead-ended parts. Contemporary creative cultural surges after atrocity, I note, likewise oscillate: some works collapse into melancholic reiteration while others succeed in carrying loss forward as living continuity.

Spirit is the second vector. Viktor Frankl (1946) testified to an inner freedom that persisted even in the Nazi death camps among those who could find meaning irrespective of the beloved's fate. Proximity to death tears the veil of the familiar into what Freud (1919) termed the *unheimlich*, but this state also potentially opens the subject to existential truth about origin and end (Heidegger, 1927; Lacan, 1962-3). Spiritual anchoring may be theological or secular: prayer, meditation, or a lucid ethic of truth can widen the horizon beyond immediate terror.

Belonging defines the third vector. Human connectedness, inter-belonging, repairs the traumatic experience of ruptured or exploded time by embedding the self within transgenerational chains, lengthening life both backward and forward. Communal texts and rituals carry private grief into shared cadence. The discussion lingers over prayer as a technology of continuity: the *Kaddish* binds the mourner to an endless lineage; even its Aramaic opacity heightens shared rhythm over content. Nature can accompany belonging as macro-container: As mentioned in Freud's brief, poetic paper "On transience" (1916), nature's ongoing beauty may feel indifferent, yet it testifies to persistence and can shelter grief without denying it.

Methodologically, the essay draws on three fields of knowledge. First, psychoanalytic theory provides the conceptual background of the working of the mind as well as it clinical ethic (Freud; Klein; Segal; Joseph; Green; Lifton). Second, close readings of canonical texts stage enhanced recognition at the edge of death, such as Franz Kafka's (1915) *Vor dem Gesetz* ("Before the law"), the story of Rabbi Akiva recorded in the Babylonian Talmud (*Berakho*t 61b), and more. Third, clinical vignettes and a brief personal testimony show how these ideas operate in practice with survivors and bereaved families following mass violence.

Clinical implications and a compact testimonial coda embody these claims. The conclusions are sober and practical. There are, the essay proposes, two "economies" of afterlife. Melancholic immortality tries to defeat death by merging with it through addiction to near death, imitations of lifelessness, or murderous ecstasies, thus amplifying destruction. Symbolic immortality accepts finitude and translates it into continuity through creativity, spirit and belonging, sometimes aided by nature and carefully contained experiential transcendence. In times of mass trauma, ethical vigilance—refusing dehumanization and mourning every innocent death—protects the symbolic field where psyche and culture can survive. Clinically, the task is to midwife vital forms of mourning: to metabolize terror, re-animate symbolization, and re-weave the subject into individual and transgenerational textures that lengthen life backward and forward.

CONTAINMENT CREATED THROUGH SPIRAL MOTION: THE COMPLEX INTERACTION BETWEEN EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL REALITY IN TIMES OF WAR, LOSS AND TURMOIL

YAEL KHENIN

The present paper concerns a specific challenge to the stability of the analytic setting and the importance of listening to the reciprocal movements between internal and external reality under conditions of war, shock, loss and intense social turmoil. I have chosen to discuss transference and countertransference in the analytic setting at times when both analyst and patient share the same dramatic external reality and are both subject to, if perhaps in different ways, severe socio-political violence. I focus upon the overt and covert manifestations of violent intrusions of external reality into the analytic setting, as well as the difficulty the mind experiences in relating to internal and external reality simultaneously.

My work suggests a model of containment created through spiral motion as a means of coping with the collapse of the containing function in situations of symmetry between analyst and patient occurring under turbulent external conditions. The interplay between internal and external reality is a fundamental topic in psychoanalytic writing. In fact, it can be said that the birth of psychoanalysis lies in Freud's discovery that an individual's response to an external event depends on the internal meaning the event acquires within the mind (Freud, 1905) and the ways in which these two dimensions continuously interweave.

In this paper, I wish to add a layer to the interaction between external and internal reality. I suggest that harsh and between turbulent and external insert: situations in external reality evoke unique characteristics in the dynamics of transference and countertransference. In addition, I suggest that the very technique which emphasizes the crucial role of transference and countertransference in the analytic relationship serves us in times when dramatic external reality imposes itself on both patient and analyst, disrupting the familiar picture of reality previously shared by both.

I employ the metaphor of *a wall collapsing during the analytic session*,

developed by Israeli psychoanalyst Yolanda Gampel (2021)* together with thinking groups in the Israeli Psychoanalytic Society, inspired by the work of Janine Puget (Puget & Wender, 1982). This metaphor refers to situations in which dramatic external events penetrate or break into the supposedly insulated consulting room, bringing down one of its walls and exposing both analyst and patient to external reality.

Puget (1982, 2020) and Gampel (1999a, 2010, 2020) explore the hidden and unconscious effects of socio-political violence on the analytic relationship. Gampel suggests that even in peaceful times there exists in the unconscious of analyst and patient alike a constant presence of what she calls the *background of the uncanny* (1999). This background is the result of past situations of socio-political violence, inscribed in the collective as well as the individual unconscious. However, there are moments in which this background moves to the foreground of the mind—not necessarily as a result of an overt external event—and exerts its influence within the analytic process, even when the analyst and patient ignore it or remain entirely unaware of its operation.

In fact, according to Gampel, there are two walls rather than one. One wall collapses as a result of the atypical, enhanced patient-analyst symmetry created in situations of social-political violence. The other, within the analyst, can hinder him or her from confronting such events (a bastion). An external reality threatening both the analyst and the society he lives in is sometimes so powerful and tantalizing that it becomes difficult to maintain simultaneous attention to both the external reality and the inner world, the world outside of the analytic setting and the one within it. The emotional difficulty of holding both realities—especially when the external one is harsh and dramatic—leads many therapists to focus on one aspect only, either internal or external, while ignoring the other or treating it merely as background material. A major difficulty we encounter when a harsh and dramatic external reality breaks into the consulting room is impairment of the containing function, due to the state of symmetry created, even for a very short moment, between therapist and patient.

The concept of containment is generally linked to Melanie Klein's (1946) concept of *projective identification*. Wilfred Bion (1959, 1962) developed and

---

*   [Ed. Note -- MHS] See Gample, Y. (2021). Un mur tombe pendant la séance….[A wall falls during the session]. *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*, 85:1253-1259.

expanded containment into an interpersonal model—*container/contained*—that exists in the mind as a *preconception* and also serves as a form of primary unconscious communication. Bion argued that through receptivity to cut off "ego parts" and nameless primal elements projected into the container by another, gradually becoming the contained, *mental* meaning can be created, leading to growth and development of the mind. Active containment involves the analyst's *receptivity*, which allows these primal elements and ineffable primary anxieties to enter; otherwise, the container remains inaccessible. However, no less crucial is the requirement that container and contained must not be completely identical. If they are, the containment function collapses, leaving nothing more than formless, disintegrated and disintegrating raw psychic material.

To cope with situations where both analyst and patient are exposed to the same danger, share the same threatening space and and are momentarily poised in a symmetrical position, I suggest that analysts seeking to maintain their analytic stance adopt a clinical model based on Kleinian thinking. This model emphasizes the importance of working-through in the countertransference and paying attention to analytic work with enactments occurring in the analytic encounter (Brenman-Pick, 1985; Joseph, 1985). Enactments are situations where the analyst is unconsciously led to play out a phantasy from the patient's internal world. It occurs when the patient's defensive organization uses the mechanism of projective identification in an extensive and extreme manner, with the aim of blurring and nullifying the separateness of analyst and patient (Steiner, 2011, p. 86). This approach allows us to think of *collapsing wall* situations as those in which extreme external reality is doing from the outside what the extensive use of projective identification attempts to do from within.

Accordingly, I suggest a model of *containment created through a spiral motion* between internal and external reality. The metaphor of the spiral emphasizes that the movement in the analytic session is not merely a linear back-and-forth motion, inward and outward, but rather that the different references to external and internal reality throughout the session constitute layers that are built one upon another. The guiding principle is that every event in the analytic encounter, even when it involves a concrete action forced by dramatic external reality, is not an isolated event, but rather becomes an object of thought, interpretation, and reflection, requiring a therapeutic response that will encompass it from many different angles. At times, the dramatic external reality will be emphasized alongside the experience shared together. At other

moments, the focus will be primarily on the patient's inner world and the mental material that meets the external reality. Both include the momentary loss of containment and the subsequent processing of the disruption and loss.

In order to move in an analytic spiral and encompass the event or experience, embracing both therapist and patient, we must be in contact with all its aspects: inside and outside, phantasy and reality, action and thought, separateness and symmetry. The analyst must relate to all of these, while agreeing to accept and acknowledge the presence of the threatening force coming from without, as well as the existence of an *internal dangerous enemy* operating from within. We must accept the fact that such a moment, when a violent and dramatic external reality breaks into the consulting room, is not a stranger invading our analytic work, but rather a part of it. The main part of creating the container is the internal work done by the analyst, who resists the temptation to return to "where we broke off" just before the interruption, or to speak about the interruption as if it were an event in the past while observing it from the outside.

I include three vignettes extracted from three psychoanalytic treatments during three turbulent periods in Israel in order to illustrate the experience of the "collapsing wall" in the analytic session and the containment created through spiral motion, encompassing the different aspects, both internal and external, of a disruptive event in external reality.

In the first, a violent arrest of an asylum seeker takes place at the doorstep of the consulting room just as the patient arrives. The traumatic event confronts both patient and analyst with helplessness and the need to relinquish omnipotence. The second takes place during the COVID-19 pandemic, after the return to in-person sessions. The analyst's failure to address the various conscious and unconscious meanings of the protective measures taken during the pandemic leads to the collapse of containment, later restored through spiral motion in the following session. The third occurs during recent missile attacks requiring analyst and patient to enter a protected space. The interruption of a session by a siren at a critical moment, followed by the necessity to seek public shelter with the analyst, and to remain there with other people, created a sense of disconnection in the patient and made her feel unreal. With the return to the consulting room, containment was achieved through spiral movement between the external interruption, the material that emerged just before the siren, past memories and phantasies the event evoked in the present, etc.

When "walls collapse" during analytical work, it is necessary to address

in the session both internal and external reality in a spiral motion in order to build *spiral containment*. This method requires willingness to return to the details of the event that exposed analyst and patient to a symmetric situation, each time from a different angle —sometimes at the analyst's initiative. This requires the analyst to relinquish an omnipotent stance and to acknowledge the possible collapse of the analytic container, when both analyst and patient are placed in a symmetrical position.

INSCRIBING PAIN:
THE PHENOMENON OF OCTOBER 7th TATTOOS
AS AN EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

NILLY SZOR

In the wake of the October 7th, 2023 surprise attacks on Israel by Hamas and amid the ensuing and ongoing war to date of this writing, a striking wave of body tattoos appeared in Israel. Still somewhat atypical in this culture overall, tattoos featuring dates, names, national symbols, and personal or collective images were engraved on the bodies of people of all ages and walks of life as visceral responses to trauma and loss. Simple tattoos display the date 7.10.23, others memorialize victims or destroyed places, ranging for smaller to larger areas of art, and some appear on the forearm, explicitly mimicking the numbers tattooed by the Nazis on their victims in Auschwitz during the Holocaust.[*]

This phenomenon, which has drawn wide public and media attention, has also sparked artistic responses (Gal-Atsmon, 2024; Rosen, 2024) and academic research (Oreg, Erel-Brodsky, & Taubman-Ben-Ari, 2024). In this essay, I examine the phenomenon of tattooing from both a cultural-historical and psychoanalytic perspective, suggesting that tattoos operate as a body-mind practice rooted deeply in both cultural evolution and the psychic development of the individual. Tattooing is presented as a multi-layered psychosomatic language composed of two interwoven components: the act of inscription—a wounding of the skin involving pain and healing, which can function defensively as a "second skin" (Bick, 1968)—and the visual image itself—open to the gaze of the other, carrying both conscious and unconscious symbolisms in a dream-like primary-process form. Tattoos can be viewed as a form of narrative whose components interact dynamically and, as Dana Amir (2013) suggests,

---

[*] [Ed. Note -- MHS] In 2018, 25 percent of Israelis were found to have at least one tattoo, compared to 40 per cent in the UK, though tattoo parlors exist throughout Israel, and an annual convention attracted visitors from all over the world. The percentage has jumped since the last quarter of 2023, particularly among those between ages 18 and 36 years-old (see Wine, G. [2025]. Surge in tattoos since October 7. *Jewish Chronicle*, September).

can be expressed in different modalities: metaphoric, metonymic, or in some cases even psychotic, depending on the psychic organization of the individual. The relative balance of these components shapes whether a tattoo becomes a site of "melancholic fixation," freezing grief and turning the body into a rigid memorial, or a transformative act of "mourning art" (Ogden, 2000), enabling emotional processing, representation and communication.

I attempt to then situate this kind of practice within a broader cultural and historical frame. Tattoos have ancient roots, already present alongside cave paintings in the Stone Age and later serving as rites of passage and magical protection in tribal cultures. In modern Western history, tattoos were long associated with social deviance and marginality, until recent decades when they evolved into a somewhat more normative part of the cultural mainstream. In the case of Judaism, and in Israel, aside from religious considerations for many, the tattooing of numbers by the Nazis on the forearm of inmates in Auschwitz as a means of dehumanization cast a unique shadow on Jewish attitudes towards tattooing to this day.

Through a psychoanalytic-cultural lens, the article draws on Freud's view of totemic tattoos (1913) as marking group belonging and taboo boundaries, and on Alessandra Lemma's (2010) concept of "the self rebirth phantasy" through body modification as a defense against psychic fragmentation. This wish, I argue, resurfaces during trauma, and during the extended mourning period following trauma, and should be understood as a rupture in psychic continuity marked by a collapse of language, where the body "accommodates" the cutting and staining when words fail. In such moments, tattooing can create a transitional space: a painful yet non-destructive wounding that anchors the unrepresentable trauma on the skin in a concrete manner yet simultaneously opening the possibility of symbolization.

This mechanism featured prominently in many of the October 7th tattoos, where the body served as a surface on which it was possible to inscribe and thus contain trauma, to identify with the excesses reported widely regarding the atrocities. These tattoos include frozen clocks, dates, slogans, national symbols, and images related to loved ones, sometimes created collectively by families or communities in ritual-like settings. The inscriptions often combine mourning and hope—featuring symbols of nature, protection, or renewal— echoing ancient tribal practices of forging a sense of indelible belonging through shared pain. As Dana Amir (2023) notes, such acts can be understood as means of forming a "community of witnesses," giving visible form to experiences that defy words. Ultimately, the article proposes understanding

tattoos as a unique body-mind language, operating on the border between the personal and the collective, between physical pain and symbolic representation, and between trauma and recovery. When relatiing to tattoos, especially in clinical context, one has to consider the specific fantasies each individual relates to the wish, choice of inscription, and process of tattooing to grasp the full depth of the tattoo. A tattoo may function as a melancholic act, freezing the lost object and foreclosing mourning, or as "mourning art" (Ogden, 2000), enabling movement, transformation, and re-engagement with life. As artist Roee Rosen (2024) demonstrates, tattoos can also give voice to the trauma of the perpetrator, exposing moral injury (Even-Tzur, 2022) on both individual and collective levels. In a reality where personal and collective traumas are intertwined, tattoos can serve as living testimonies, demonstrating that even when words fail, pain can still be approached, inscribed, made visible, and transformed into a container of memories that conveys a sense of belonging and the possibility of renewed life.

PSYCHOANALYTIC THOUGHTS ON WRAPPING
AS A PSYCHIC MOVEMENT IN ART AND ART THERAPY
IN THE CONTEXT OF COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

MICHAL BAT OR

This article offers an art-based psychoanalytic inquiry into the aesthetic mode of wrapping[*] threads or ribbons around solid objects, interpreted as a reflection of various psychic movements following psychic trauma. The inquiry is grounded upon three strands of psychoanalytic thought: (1) the concepts of primary holding and the integration of self-parts; (2) the integration of memory fragments and dissociated aspects of the self resulting from trauma; and (3) a developmental perspective on relationships with, and actions directed toward inanimate objects. This latter strand also connects to art therapy as a therapeutic practice, which invites clients to engage with inanimate materials through embodied art-making.

Through a phenomenological and narrative analysis of the artworks of five women artists—Adva Drori, Arian Litman, Judith Scott, Mona Hatoum, and Nurit Wolk—each of whom incorporate wrapping techniques in their artistic practice following trauma, two central thematic axes were identified and elaborated. I illustrate each axis with a clinical vignette drawn from the "Safe Space Open Studio," which provided support to evacuated Israeli children following the massacre of October 7th, 2023.

The first axis, which I refer to as "From bandaging-as-disclosure to

---

[*] [Ed. Note -- MHS] By "wrapping" the author intends a specific art technique. From the translation point of view, which should not go lost on the non-Hebrew reader, the author uses several different Hebrew verbs which, while globally similar, have fine, nuanced meanings rich in deeper significance, such as ליפוף (*lǐ'fūf*), כריכה (*ke'ri'khah*), עטיפה (*āᵃ'tǐ'fāh*), חבישה (*ḥā'vǐ'shāh*), and התכמסות (*hit'kām'sūt*), which she ultimately relates to the notions of the "skin envelope" and the creation or weaving of a "second skin." Overall, the author emphasizes the different ways in which participants can connect, at first neuro-physiologically and then later with insight, with a range of experiences involving wrapping or swathing להתכרבל (*lᵉ-hǐt'kār'bēl*), covering, disclosing, concealing, swaddling, cloaking, binding, coiling or winding לגלול (*lᵉ-g'lōl*), and more.

wrapping-as-concealment," describes a continuum: from wrapping that envelops an object while preserving its contours to excessive wrapping as an expression of the collapse of object representations and the struggle to restore them. Phenomenologically, "wrapping-as-concealment" does not preserve the contours of the wrapped object but rather conceals it—or even engulfs it—within multiple layers of wrapping. The second axis, "From wrapping as connecting objects to wrapping in image-creation" traces a shift from wrapping as a means of linking separated objects—where meaning arises from their close juxtaposition—to wrapping that fuses objects into a wholly new image, using them as malleable building blocks for creation.

I propose that these axes represent distinct psychic responses to trauma, ranging from gestures that express a need for holding and healing (e.g., wrapping as a form of bandaging the wound or a fracture following trauma, and wrapping as an attempt to merge with the other object, to become inseparable from it in the context of traumatic loss), to excessive wrapping that conceals the object, forming a constant growing matter that may look like a cocoon or evolve into a new sculpture. This may reflect the collapses of mental representations but might also reflect a primary need to be held, and maybe a wish to hold on to lost representations when one is swamped by the unbearable. The wrappings in the first axis demonstrate not only varying levels of psychic investment—perhaps corresponding to emotional regulation needs in the throes of trauma—but also qualitative differences in how brokenness and loss are confronted. The bandaging pole may represent the acknowledgment of a wound that seeks visibility and healing.

Alternatively, in the context of traumatic loss, the style of wrapping expresses a recognition of the profound loss of the object, the longing for it, and the deep desire to preserve the bond with it. Excessive and concealing wrapping tends to embody a more primary and visceral experience of psychic trauma which is expressed through body movements that conceal the object while at the same time endeavoring to hold on to it. The excessiveness of the wrapping may reflect the psychic endeavor to retain or restore a sense of control and agency amidst devastating events. Though nonsemantic as such, such products take on the role of metonymic (part-for-whole) testimony.

The second axis highlights wrapping as a practice that forges connections between objects. In examples that the author and fellow workers have seen in the Safe Open Studio, one can observe a spectrum ranging from enactments that replicate the experience of a collapse of previous structures— although now in a therapeutic setting, with the witnessing and *wit[h]nessing* of the

art therapists and other group members—to forms of wrapping that serve the creation of integration among memory fragments, parts of the self, and the emergence of wishes imbued with agency and hope.

In both axes, distinct approaches to wrapping emerge: (a) holding and connective practices and (b) repetitive, kinesthetic gestures that yield idiosyncratic meanings within the artwork. The wrapping may reflect (1) the need to testify non-verbally about catastrophic and chaotic events that occurred, (2) the struggle to feel capable (even in a manic position) despite loss and trauma, (3) efforts to reconstruct a protective envelope, (4) efforts to connect fragmented memories and split parts of the self, and, finally, (5) to reconstruct new meanings.

I thus suggest that the psychic materials encapsulated in these modalities embody diverse dimensions of post-traumatic recovery: from the attempt to restore a sense of holding, protection, and wholeness, to the gathering, remembering, processing, and integration of fragmented experiences. Underlying all is the expression of psychic movement—from paralysis and helplessness toward movement, contact, connection, and the creation of new meaning. Essentially, regarding all the modes of wrapping presented in this article, it is important to attend to material dimensions (softness and hardness, quantity, choice of materials, as well as adhesiveness such as when using masking tape), and to our own receptive witnessing as therapists, who also participate in these productions *in the sense of wrapping by virtue of understanding-as-swathing and occasionally interpreting* the intra- and interpsychic dimension of this artistic effort to heal from collective trauma.

"MEMORY FREEZE-FRAMES":
ON PHOTOGRAPHY AND PSYCHIC PROCESSING

BASMAT KLEIN

This essay explores the relationship between war imagery—both photographed and internal, described by narrative—and the possibility of engaging with and mentally processing unbearable realities. The discussion is grounded in my personal experience of photographing scenes in the kibbutzim surrounding the territory of Gaza following the October 7th terror attacks, alongside my clinical experience with patients in therapy who reported their struggles with powerfully "imprinted" visual images that emerged in the therapeutic space. These images, whether concretely captured via photography or internally formed images in the mind, are understood here as variations of psychic space: attempts to digest the undigestible and represent the unrepresentable. As the war drags on, the images—burned into individual and collective memory— have begun to lose their charge. Caught between numbness and pain, this discussion considers what it means to hold such images and whether they can still serve as bridges to meaning.

My discussion further explores the tension between memory as fluid and temporal—characterized by flow and unfolding—and the photographic freeze-frame, which captures a moment in stasis. Drawing on Susan Sontag's insight that photographs offer "a compact form for memorizing" (2003, p. 22), my exploration reflects on the paradox of still images: on one hand, photographic images render trauma momentarily graspable; on the other hand, such images risk freezing the experience beyond psychic accessibility. Through both clinical-narrational and photographic vignettes, I examine how static images—external and internal—can hold unbearable content in suspended form, allowing for gradual psychic movement and transformation. I believe that there are circumstances in which rather than opposing flow, the freeze-frame becomes a vessel within the flow, providing a kind of resting place for thought before fuller symbolic integration begins.

Roland Barthes' (1980) distinction between *studium* and *punctum* serves as an additional theoretical lens through which to understand how small,

unexpected details in a photograph rupture ("pierce," "wound" or "prick" in Barthes' language) our gaze and evoke an emotional response. These concepts, introduced in his work *Camera Lucida* (1980), describe two ways viewers experience a photograph: studium refers to the general, culturally and socially-coded meaning of a photo that is understood through shared knowledge, whereas punctum is a specific, often incidental detail within an image that breaks through the viewer's consciousness, to create a deep, emotional, and subjective connection that transcends normative understanding or expectations. These puncta mark the place where external representation intersects with internal resonance, creating a space for psychic work.

Within the psychoanalytic frame, I draw on Wilfred Bion's (1962) concept of the alpha function—the capacity to transform raw, sensory-emotional experiences (beta elements) into material that can be thought about (alpha elements). In moments of trauma, this function may be compromised, leaving the psyche flooded and uncontained. I suggest that visual images—particularly in the context of war—can aid this psychic digestion by giving a stable form to that which cannot yet be thought. Michael Eigen's (2001) work further deepens this perspective. He describes how patients recovering from psychosis often dream of cameras and later turned to photography as a way to safely encounter reality. The act of capturing an image, he suggests, offers a holding frame in which meaning can begin to emerge—particularly when the image is not overwhelmed by intrusive psychic content. Within this framework, Eigen's reflections resonate with the therapeutic use of imagery—both external and internal—as an avenue for psychic processing. Visual representations, including those formed in the mind's eye, may create a kind of psychic reverie that holds unassimilated experience and facilitates its gradual transformation. The image, in this sense, does not replace thought but precedes it, offering a space in which unbearable content may be contained, and ultimately thought.

Throughout, clinical perspectives and photographic practice are interwoven to illuminate shared mechanisms of psychic containment, resonance and transformation. This integrative approach situates visual imagery—whether external photographs or internal mental representations—as a key site where emotional experience and symbolic thought meet. By drawing on psychoanalytic theory alongside lived and observed phenomena, the essay offers a nuanced exploration of how images function as both containers and catalysts for psychic processing in contexts of trauma and conflict.

Theoretical contributions by Israeli psychoanalyst Itamar Levy (2012, 2024) regarding visual thinking in psychoanalysis enrich the discussion,

suggesting that while words are necessary for emotional elaboration, images offer a parallel, affectively charged mode of access to unconscious material. Internal images, like photographs taken with the mind's eye, can serve as containers—holding what is not yet speakable but already felt. This becomes particularly vital in the face of ongoing trauma, when linear narrative falters and symbolic thought is momentarily suspended.

The discussion also invokes Mikhail Bakhtin's (1975) notion of the *chronotope*—a fused unit of time and space—to think about trauma images that collapse temporal and spatial dimensions. Photographs and internal visual fragments from the events of October 7th, often revisited obsessively, operate as psychic nodes where past, present, and fantasy coalesce. These internal and external galleries carry not just the horror of what was seen, but the psychological effort or work needed to give it form.

Finally, the essay reflects on the ethical and emotional labor of witnessing. Susan Sontag (2003) warns that repeated exposure to atrocity images may dull feeling rather than sharpen conscience. By way of response, I turn to Merav Roth's (2024) concept of an expanded gaze—a psychological and ethical stance that resists narrowing perception to suffering alone, and instead opens it to beauty, continuity, and vitality. Though Roth does not speak of this in terms of photography, her proposal supports cultivating a broader mode of perception—internal as well as external. Holding an image in mind, whether photographic or imagined, thus becomes an ethical commitment: not only to survive suffering but to uncover meaning and affirmation within it.

THE HOME NESTING METAPHOR:
PHANTASY, THE UNCANNY, AND THE PSYCHIC POSITION

TAMMUZ AFLALO

In this essay, I introduce a new metaphor—home nesting—to describe the rich and complex psychological process in which the boundaries of the psyche are shaped in accordance with its emotional content and through constant interaction with the environment. This process is influenced by both external events and internal experiences, and enables the individual to form an adaptive and flexible mental structure in which there is a gradual separation between internal and external realities.

The central thesis of the article is that home nesting is shaped by the interplay between two axes. The first axis includes two unconscious phantasies about internal home nesting. The first phantasy centers on a stable home to which one belongs with ease and security, while the second phantasy centers on the absence of a home, destabilization, a lack of belonging, and the absence of existential stability. The second axis includes two psychic states: the *Heimlich* (homely), and the *Unheimlich* (uncanny). While the first axis is characterized by a calm existence that represses the sources of uncanny anxiety, the second axis includes the sudden intrusion of reality, the uncanny, which generates destabilization, dread, and existential distress.

This paper proposes that there is interaction between these two axes and demonstrates their various manifestations in Kleinian psychic positions: the autistic-contiguous, paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. Under optimal conditions, the uncanny psychic state, sometimes facilitated by therapy, creates a destructive-constructive psychic movement that promotes integration between the phantasies of the first axis and movement between Kleinian positions, thereby strengthening the work of internal home nesting. However, if the psyche lacks sufficient strength for connection and integration, or when the home nesting stage is fragmented and fragile from the outset, the emergence of the uncanny state may lead to a destructive collapse or even to a complete breakdown of stable representations of the home and of the entire home nesting process.

Although Melanie Klein did not explicitly write about the internal home, the case studies she presented in several of her essays suggest that the internal home plays an important role in our psychic world, influencing how we interpret external reality and act within it. Anxiety exists regarding the collapse of the internal home or the feeling of being isolated and mentally distant from it. A resilient internal home that withstands such attacks creates a good object that is a source of warmth, love, comfort, and a sense of belonging. In Klein's ([1940] 2002) essay "Mourning and its relation to manic-depressive states," she demonstrates, through case descriptions, mental states in which the internal home is affected by loss in reality and is in danger of annihilation. Klein describes how, through the mourning process, the psyche recovers from external loss by reconstructing the internal home. She also demonstrates how the internal world can serve as a protection or psychic refuge from the painful knowledge of the loss in external reality. In another essay, "On the sense of loneliness" ([1963] 2013), Klein describes a state in which the phantasy of satisfaction and comfort is linked to being outside the home, not within it. This article examines three case studies presented by Klein.

I address the uncanny not only as a phenomenon, but also as a necessary psychic component that drives psychic processes while being in a dialectical relationship with its psychic opposite—the homely. The transformative dialectic is examined in the context of home nesting processes. In the depressive position, which becomes accustomed to reality (Roth, 2020, p. 28), better integration occurs between good and bad, between the split parts of the psyche, and between the different poles between which the internal home conducts its dialectic. In contrast, the paranoid-schizoid position, which rejects an integrated reality, is characterized by increased use of the defense mechanisms of splitting and projecting. In this position, parts of the self are split and projected into other objects, and the self lacks cohesion and structure, and, thus, it is very difficult to bring closer the opposing poles of the different dialectics inhabiting the internal home, to the point of entrenchment in one pole and a lack of connection to the other.

The uncanny state of mind will usually remain there, repressed and inaccessible to consciousness. However, when it suddenly appears, it causes powerful and turbulent disturbance to the psyche. Even after the homely psychic state returns, the individual will struggle to integrate within those internal home elements that emerged from their unconscious that are associated with the uncanny, due to the disturbance and dread they entail.

Finally, in the more primary, autistic-contiguous psychic position, the

dominant anxieties do not relate to the internalized object, but rather to the sense of existence at the most basic level: existence as a continuous, bounded, and cohesive body in space and time (Durban, 2017, p. 182). This position is dominant in the adult psyche in autistic and autistic-psychotic states and structures. It is characterized by the dominance of the uncanny and stems from the fact that, from the outset, the homely state was not well established in the psyche.

Through examples, this article illustrates the interaction between the home nesting axes in the different Kleinian positions. The depressive position is illustrated by Freud's personal experience of self-misrecognition in the train compartment (*wagon-lit*) case reported in from "The Uncanny" (Freud, [1919] 2012). The paranoid-schizoid position is illustrated by an original case description of 'Kinneret,' a patient in her forties who grew up on a kibbutz. The home nesting phantasy is characterized in her by polarization and splitting between the home she internalized in childhood—abandoned, lonely, lacking a responsible adult—and the home she built in adulthood, in which she tried to act based on opposite characteristics—protected, present, and available to her children. The therapeutic work recreated the polarization between the patient's two phantasies of home nesting. Through the uncanny, which emerged unexpectedly and with greater intensity within a short period in therapy, it was possible in the therapeutic process to initiate a depressive movement that somewhat softened the patient's defenses and enabled better integration between split and projected parts, and between the two phantasies regarding home nesting—feelings of familiarity, belonging, and security, alongside vulnerability and insecurity. In this way, the patient's home nesting process was reactivated.

The autistic-contiguous position is demonstrated through the tragic figure of Nathaniel in E.T. A. Hoffmann's story, "The Sandman" ([1816] 2012). In Nathaniel, the uncanny state of the psyche was intense and frequent, and the homely state was not sufficient to enable recovery from it. It is likely that losing his father in childhood and the interchanging figures who took care of him did not allow for the construction of a stable home phantasy. The traumatic experience in childhood, possibly alongside an innate intrapsychic difficulty, undermined his home nesting work and generated an excess of the uncanny. This excess originated from a powerful and unregulated primary anxiety that repeatedly flooded and attacked the psyche through the repetition compulsion (Freud, [1920] 2021). Nathaniel could no longer bear the intensity of this shattering anxiety, and when the uncanny unexpectedly emerged and

undermined his inner stability, he became psychotic and took his own life.

From a therapeutic perspective, it is important for the therapist to position themselves as a partner in the movement between psychic states through transference and countertransference relationships, and through projective identification. At given moments in therapy, the psychotherapist must allow him- or herself to experience uncanny dread and to understand it as a revival of the patient's internalized object relations, to grant them meaning within themselves and, by extension, within the therapeutic relationship. In this way, the therapist helps the patient distinguish between internal and external reality, establish separation between them, and validate the possibility of movement between psychic states. This movement exposes important psychic material that was repressed in the past and allows it to be processed through the therapeutic relationship. The therapist's partnership and the giving of meaning to the therapeutic process create opportunities for integration.

In the conceptualization of home nesting, the affinity of the uncanny component to the entire structure and dynamics of the particular psyche is formulated, clarifying in which psychic positions this component contributes to the work of home nesting and drives development, and in which it can also sow destruction. In this conceptualization, the uncanny is in dialectic with the homely, which also influences the two phantasies that exist in the psyche regarding home—a stable home, and a disturbed, fragmented home. These components exist along two axes that maintain ongoing reciprocal intrapsychic and interpersonal interactions, which constitute the process of home nesting in a person's psyche—the place where they dwell and live their psychic lives, whether in abodes of peace, or in restless wandering.

REFLECTIONS ON TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESSES OF THE SELF IN PSYCHOANALYTICALLY-ORIENTED MUSIC THERAPY

SHAI LEVINGER and NURIT PERL

The authors of this article explore transformative processes of the self within the context of music therapy. We draw upon music therapy theory, developmental perspectives and primarily psychoanalytic frameworks—especially Heinz Kohut's self psychology and its contemporary developments in Israel. The central thesis suggests that music therapy offers a unique modality to access and transform regressive, pre-verbal areas of the psyche. These processes occur within what Heinz Kohut termed the *virtual self* by which he meant a developmental phase in earliest infancy that precedes the formation of the nuclear self, a developing state when there is still no sense of selfhood. Speaking of this early unstructured state, Kohut wrote, "The newborn infant cannot have any reflexive awareness of himself, that he is not capable of experiencing himself, if ever so dimly, as a unit, cohesive in space and enduring in time, which is a center of initiative and the recipient of impressions" (Kohut 1977, 95). Following the writing of Israeli psychoanalyst Claudia Kogan (2011), we propose extending this concept to later stages of life, where extensive areas of the psyche, unformed due to persistent failures in early selfobject provision, still remain in their potential state yet may still be "built" if appropriate selfobject support is available.

Musical experiences in infancy may play a critical role in developing an initial sense of selfhood. Stern (1985) coined the concept of "vitality affects" relating to the sense of being alive through inner changes of the infant experiences, changes that can be described in musical terms and formats and are important to the emergent sense of self. Trevarthen (2002) coined the notion of "communicative musicality," a special kind of communication with caregivers that takes place in infancy. In this primordial language, words have no meaning (if there even is speech), only their music. According to Trevarthen, communicative musicality exerts enormous power in creating a healthy sense of safety and togetherness and inner connection.

We further propose, drawing on Trevarthen (2002), Amir (2001, 2017), and

Kohut (1950, 1957), that music therapy and specifically musical improvisation during music therapy can facilitate regression to these primordial and unbuilt areas and thus can facilitate transformation in which a sense of coherent, reflective selfhood can emerge. While regression to archaic states is crucial, the therapist's role in these moments is central. Kohut wrote extensively about mirroring and idealizing selfobjects (Kohut 1971, 1977) early in life, taking form within the as yet virtual self, but he also mentioned the important aspect that involves holding the fetus and then the baby and treating it as if he was already with a self, thereby giving birth to its actual emergence (Kohut 1971). Following Kohut, Kogan (2011) offered the concept of "virtual selfobject function," describing situations in which therapists must be willing to create within themselves a psychic space for the emergence of the patient's self—holding and believing in the becoming self or some of its basic aspects before they fully manifest.

We argue that the combination of music therapy's capacity to support regression together with the therapist's ability to serve as a virtual selfobject can support the belated formation of a cohesive core self. This may be especially relevant for patients whose early relationships were marked by traumatic failures of recognition and psychosocial attunement. Clinically, we present the case of "Ittai," a 14-year-old boy who came to treatment in an emotionally shut-down and disengaged state. Verbal communication was initially ineffective, and therapeutic encounters were marked by silence and a sense of disconnection. Through spontaneous musical improvisation, beginning with a rain stick and later a guitar and xylophone, Ittai began opening up to an inner world, initially unstructured, and slowly became able to access and express inner emotional states previously unavailable through language. These improvisations enabled Ittai to experience a sense of self and inner vitality. We suggest that significant psychic transformation occurred: a movement from virtual existence toward psychic presence, supported by the therapist's function as a virtual selfobject and musical modality of therapy.

Finally, we elaborate upon Kohut's (1996) notion of transformation through creativity and on its application in music therapy. Kohut described five transformations of narcissism, contending that each of them is through a mode of creativity in which the boundaries between self and other are blurred and there is a sense of merger with world. He also emphasized this transformation as occurring in later stages in psychoanalytic treatment and as an attribute of the more mature self. We believe that musical improvisation in music therapy can create a transformational space in which transformation of narcissism

through creative activity can occur. However, we view the transformation of narcissism through creativity, as we tried to show in our clinical demonstration, as a fundamental shift, a shift from absence to presence, from formlessness to form; a change from absence of a sense of selfhood to a sense of vitality and an initial sense of selfhood. That is, on one hand, transformation of narcissism through creativity does not belong only to the more mature manifestations of the self and, on the other hand, does not necessarily exist only in the advanced stages of treatment or upon its completion.

In conclusion, this article is part of our own ongoing reflections regarding the importance of therapeutic modalities in psychotherapy that go beyond the use of language and interpretation, as well as a reflection regarding the critical importance of therapist's own attitudes, and modes of presence in fostering transformation. We have emphasized the ethical presence of the therapist, in the sense that the therapist's presence carries the responsibility of creation (and not just of re-creation or revealing something that is in the psyche but is hidden and suppressed), shaping the sense of selfhood of our patients and the construction of their world. Music therapy is a unique modality that can serve this purpose in that at its best, it may allow for devotion to an all-encompassing and non-verbal primary experience, while the therapist's musically and emotionally attuned presence can foster the creation of sense of selfhood. Sometimes, the stage of semantic exploration can and should appear, but only as a second step, after the initial construction of the self.

THE ROLE OF MOVEMENT IN ESTABLISHING THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL IN FREUD

ALON ROE

I have chosen to examine in this paper the formation and transformation of the distinction between internal (inside) and external (outside) in Freudian metapsychology, with particular attention to the constitutive role of movement between these dimensions.* The analysis traces how the internal/external distinction undergoes successive reconfigurations from the onset of, and throughout ego development, rather than being established once and for all, definitively. My central argument demonstrates that movement serves as the foundational mechanism through which the ego establishes, dissolves, and reconstitutes the boundaries between internal and external reality.

My investigation begins with Freud's revision in "Instincts and their vicissitudes" (1915) of his earlier developmental schema. In "Formulations on Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911),

---

* [Ed. Note -- MHS] A word on translation. The Hebrew title of this essay is תפקיד התנועה בכינון ההבחנה בין פנים לחוץ אצל פרויד, using the word פנים *pᵉ'nĭm* for "inside" and חוץ *ḥūẓ* for "outside." The Hebrew language does not have especially distinct terms for "inside" and "internal," nor for "outside" and "external." However, "inside" is usually indicated by פנים *pᵉ'nĭm* (an adverb) and פנימי *pᵉ'nĭ'mĭ* but also by בתוך *bē'tōkh* (a preposition), denoting "within." "Internal" would be the better English term for the Hebrew פנימי *pē'nĭ'mĭ*. "Outside" could be translated as חוץ or בחוץ *bā-ḥūẓ,* whereas "external" as an adjective, referring to the external world, is best denoted by חיצוני *ḥĭ'ẓō'nĭ*. The words "inside" and "outside" are not identical to the terms "internal" and "external," though they are, of course, synonymous. One could argue that prior to the capacity for internalization, in normal development, things from the outside world are experienced by the immature mind as "inside," or, as a result of trauma or maldevelopment, as in psychotic states, as incorporative presences "inside" the mind. "Internal" implies that some degree of psychic or mental internalization (i.e., de-concretization) has taken place. This is why the meaning of movement, as well, itself, must undergo change.

Freud had posited that the pleasure-ego was the primary developmental stage, with external reality appearing only after the failure of hallucinatory satisfaction. However, by 1915 Freud was prepared to introduce a more primitive stage—the reality-ego—which precedes the pleasure-ego and whose task it is to establish the initial distinction between inside and outside through a remarkably simple criterion: the capacity for motor flight. That is to say, stimuli from which the infant is able to escape through muscular action are attributed to the external world, while those whose stimulus persists despite such action are gradually recognized as internal, marking the presence of instinctual needs. This elementary distinction reveals that movement constitutes the original organizing principle for psychic topology, establishing what is internal as precisely that from which flight is impossible.

The significance of this formulation extends beyond mere categorization. Movement emerges as neither purely external nor purely internal; rather, it originates in the ego's action yet fundamentally concerns the budding mind's capacity to take stock of spatial positioning. The logic of movement, as it were, dictates inside and outside as that which falls within or exceeds its operational boundaries. This motoric basis for the inside/outside distinction suggests that the most fundamental of early psychic differentiations depend upon the ego's *embodied* attempts at orientation within an initially undifferentiated field of stimuli.

In the narcissistic stage that follows the establishment of this basic distinction, the ego maintains itself in a state of primary narcissism where it identifies completely with what is pleasurable, remaining indifferent to the external world. The auto-erotic possibilities of satisfaction allow the ego to sustain the illusion that it is the complete source of its own pleasure. External objects hold no interest as they are not yet recognized as sources of pleasure or unpleasure. The external world exists merely as something from which to flee when disturbing stimuli arise, without yet constituting a domain of genuine otherness or significance.

However from its inception, this narcissistic organization contains the seeds of its own dissolution. The ego must gradually acknowledge that it cannot maintain complete identification with pleasure, as, semi-paradoxically, unpleasurable stimuli arise internally and pleasurable objects are discovered externally. This recognition initiates the transition to the pleasure-ego stage, where the fundamental organizing principle shifts from indifference to active manipulation of boundaries. The pleasure-ego attempts to introject all pleasurable elements and project all unpleasurable ones, seeking to reconstruct

itself as purely pleasurable despite the impossibility of this aim. This would, without further intervention or growth, return the ego regressively to the illusion of internal megalomania.

Movement assumes new significance in this stage through the motor inclinations that arise in response to objects. When an object becomes a source of pleasure, a motor tendency develops to approach and incorporate it into the ego—what Freud termed "attraction." Conversely, unpleasurable objects generate motor tendencies toward increasing distance, manifesting as repulsion and hatred. These movements of approach and withdrawal constitute the ego's attempt to reorganize the distribution of pleasure and unpleasure according to its ideal of complete identification with pleasure. However, movement simultaneously enables and limits these totalizing aspirations. While, on the one hand, it creates the possibility of introjection and projection—the psychic mechanisms through which the ego attempts to incorporate the pleasurable and expel the unpleasurable—it also prevents their complete realization. Movement necessarily maintains the ego in some kind of relation to internal objects; absolute union through incorporation and absolute elimination through expulsion remain impossible. The ego can only be more or less proximate to objects, never achieving the type of total merger or annihilation it seeks. Thus, the very mechanism that allows the pleasure-ego to attempt its reorganization of inside and outside also ensures the failure of this project in its absolute form.

The paper then examines how these early configurations of the internal/external distinction persist and transform in later psychic formations, particularly in phobic neurosis as analyzed in "The Unconscious" (Freud, 1915). In phobia, the ego employs a sophisticated version of projection to manage threatening instinctual representatives. When an instinctual representative threatens to become conscious, generating anxiety, the ego establishes a substitute formation—the phobic object—onto which the threatening cathexis is displaced. This external object then becomes something from which the ego can maintain physical distance, thereby managing the internal threat through spatial avoidance. This mechanism reveals a remarkable development: the ego is now able to treat internal stimuli as if they were external ones, applying the logic of spatial flight to psychic contents. The phobic structure depends upon—in a sense relies upon, from a symptom-defense point of view—the ego's capacity to relate to internal instinctual representatives through the schema originally developed for external stimuli; that is, through the possibility of motor flight. The maintenance of distance from instinctual

representatives becomes possible only through maintaining physical distance from their external substitutes. The ego must internalize the logic of the outside to relate to its own threatening contents, while simultaneously the external world becomes organized according to the associative connections of psychic content.

The phobic mechanism thus demonstrates how each domain—inside and outside—can only maintain itself through adopting the operational logic of the other. *The inside establishes its capacity to manage threatening contents by internalizing the spatial logic of external reality, while the outside gains psychic significance through its organization according to internal associative networks.* This mutual constitution suggests that the distinction between inside and outside, rather than being a fixed boundary, operates as a dynamic system where each term requires the other's logic to realize itself. Throughout these developmental stages, movement serves not merely as a tool for distinguishing inside from outside but as the medium through which their ongoing dialectical relationship unfolds. From the initial differentiation based on the possibility of flight, through the pleasure-ego's attempts at total reorganization via approach and withdrawal, to the sophisticated projective mechanisms of phobia, movement enables both the establishment and the undermining of psychic boundaries. The ego's positioning in space—both physical and psychic—emerges as the fundamental condition for its self-constitution and its relation to reality.

I believe that my analysis reveals that the inside/outside distinction in Freudian metapsychology cannot be understood as a simple binary opposition established once and maintained thereafter. Instead, it appears as a dynamic configuration that undergoes continuous transformation according to the dialectical tensions inherent in the ego's gradual development. The ego emerges not when it distinguishes itself from the outside, but when the mode of this distinction becomes problematic and requires reconfiguration. Each developmental stage represents a different solution to the problem of how to maintain the distinction while managing the pressures that threaten to dissolve it.

Ultimately, I believe that my contribution lies in demonstrating how movement functions as the organizing principle that both enables and constrains the ego's attempts to establish stable boundaries between inside and outside. Rather than serving merely as a criterion for distinction, movement emerges as the dynamic medium through which the ego continuously negotiates its relation to both internal drives and external reality. This understanding opens

new perspectives on the embodied nature of psychic development and the fundamental role of spatiality in the constitution of subjectivity within Freudian metapsychology.

THE ANGEL OF HISTORY, A HEADLESS RHINOCEROS, AND A LADY CARVED ON A SARCOPHAGUS: ON THE ROLE OF CREATIVITY IN TIMES OF CALAMITY

GUY PEREL

In this theoretical but also quite personal essay, the author deals with the place and role of art when dealing with ongoing stressful situations, such as the one that contemporary Israeli society and, of course, the author personally, have found themselves immersed within since October 7th, 2023. Such events force us to constantly cope, whether by taking action or by using defense mechanisms and disconnection, since the external reality forced upon us is a turbulent one, requiring constant monitoring and response. The ongoing need to respond to external reality causes us to invest the best of our mental resources in the task. Individuals and groups do what is necessary in order to protect ourselves and survive, but in doing so we also subject our inner world to the rules of this reality and may feel compelled to reduce ourselves to its dimensions and rules. In the first part of the essay, I present concepts from Jungian theory, enriched by those of his pupil and exponent Erich Neumann (1905-1960; since 1934, Neumann lived and worked in Tel-Aviv until his premature death), centered particularly upon Neumann's concept of the Distress Ego.

The ego's arduous journey toward individuality and wholeness often involves suffering and conflict as it differentiates from the powerful, instinctual forces of the unconscious and the demands of the collective. The ego must struggle hard to differentiate itself from the initial, undifferentiated state of wholeness (the Uroboros, the symbol of the snake that pursues and swallows its own tail) and the powerful forces of the Great Mother archetype. Neumann referred to the "distress ego" as the "emergency ego," which emerges when there is insufficient shelter and the ego must take form too soon, compelling this immature ego to act pseudo-independently This is particularly so when chronic trauma characterizes the child's early life. When the infant is forced to deal with significant difficulties in his initial relationship with his mother, there will be a disruption in the formation of the bond between the infant's

developing Ego and the Self (in Jungian terms, the archetype of wholeness in his psyche), distorting what Newman called the "Ego-Self Axis"—a positive and fruitful tension between these two complementary parts of the psyche. In an adult, relying on a distress ego will inevitably involve a reduction in the ability to connect with the unconscious, damage to symbolic ability, damage to creativity, damage to mental and emotional development, and many other forms of reduction, etc. The author draws a parallel between the crisis situation in which an infant finds himself, which develops the Distress Ego, to the situation of an adult person who is forced to devote most of his or her mental resources to adapting and coping with an unbearable external reality.

The author concludes the theoretical part of the essay with an analysis of two dreams, one of a patient and one of his own. Both dreams represent a disconnection that occurred along the Ego-Self axis in response to the stressful period each was undergoing.

In the remainder of the essay, the author reviews three pauses or stops at what he calls "water wells," that is, three personal encounters he has had with artistic creativity since October 2023, which had the power to demonstrate the role of creation in times of calamity. The first water well was an exhibition by the Spanish painter El Greco (Doménikos Theotokópoulos [1541-1614]), which the author happened to visit a few days after the massacre in October 2023. The circumstances were that during that period the author was in Milan and due to flight difficulties was only able to return to Israel a week later after the traumatic event. After several days of shock and emotional detachment in a foreign country, visiting the exhibition allowed the author for the first time to anchor himself, to establish a deep emotional connection to the relevant internal and external events. The author discusses a groundbreaking feature of El Greco's work—using canonical motifs, the central one being Jesus and The Cross, the author goes below the canon and focuses on the layered inner world of the characters. Erich Neumann's own reference to El Greco (along with other artists) is mentioned: Neumann envisioned El Greco as an example of an artist whose work was ahead of its time, bringing to culture what it lacked as compensation for the collective ossification of consciousness that was expressed in the concretization of the cultural canon of their time.

The author next focuses on El Greco's well-known painting "Laocoön"

(1610-1614),* a scene set not in Greece, but in the city of Toledo, Spain, his adopted home. A comparison is made of the painting's almost grisly image of an old man consumed by grief and inclined to die, to the image of the more muscular version of the hero wrestling energetically with a snake featured in the famous statue of "Laocoön and his Sons,"** a copy of which was also placed in that same exhibition.

The second "water well" took place at a professional conference the author recently attended. In one of the conference workshops dealing with a comparison between the thought of Sigmund Freud and Walter Benjamin, there took place a lengthy discussion of Benjamin's remarks about the 1920 monoprint "Angelus Novus" by Swiss artist Paul Klee. In the author's reverie, he experienced a fantasy image of the angel's "face" as replaced by that of a headless rhinoceros—a 15,000-year-old archaeological find that he recently became aware of while writing a book offering an interpretation of human art from the Upper Paleolithic period, in the spirit of Jung and Neumann. One explanation the book offers regarding prehistoric art is that it is related to the gradual disappearance of large animals at that time. This disappearance was perceived as a fundamental disruption in the integrity of the world, as an unraveling of the order that contains and nourishes. The cave paintings and other forms of creations were an attempt to reestablish the vitality and integrity of the world in a space that extends beyond the visible. Upon reflection, the author supposes that the headless rhinoceros's image might have served as support for the claims presented in the book. The researchers who found this etching assumed that it was painted in response to the extinction of rhinoceros in the area where it lived. Unlike cave paintings from earlier periods, the paucity of the rhinoceros engraving may indicate that it was created from an elegiac position that concurs with reality. The author intertwines the two tragic figures standing in the center of both works of art and considers these "passive witnesses" to an ongoing process of destruction that they are compelled to

---

*   [Ed. Note -- MHS] In the original myth, Laocoön was a Trojan priest of Poseidon, and he and his two sons Antiphantes and Thymbraeus were strangled by sea serpents, a punishment sent by the gods, who supported the Greeks during this war, after Laocoön attempted to warn his countrymen about the Trojan Horse.

** [Ed. Note -- MHS] This marble sculpture is from the 1st century BCE, created by Athenadoros, Agesander, and Polydoros of Rhodes. In this grouping, Laocoön seems to release an anguished yell and struggles beside his sons against Athena's sea serpents. The sculpture, owned by the Vatican, was unearthed in Rome in 1506 and inspired several Renaissance artists, and is presumed to have been the inspiration for El Greco's painting executed during his so-called Spanish Period.

witnesses, similar to his own experience in coping with the October massacre and its protracted aftermath.

The third "water well" was a book of poems by the Israeli poet Tal Nitzan, *The Forest We Invented* (Poetry Place, 2025). A central characteristic of the poet's writing reaches its peak: a clear observation of the horror of external reality, and the sadness and loneliness that are inherent in human existence, interwoven with great compassion and immeasurable beauty. Perhaps one of the reasons this characteristic reaches its peak in this book is the period during which the poems were written: the ongoing deterioration of political and social processes, the COVID-19 pandemic and, of course, the horror of the October 7th massacre and the war that continues since. As the author analyzes some of the poems in *The Forest We Invented* he observes that they do not illuminate the darkness nor do they eliminate it, on the contrary, they observe it, feel it, describe it with a completeness that paradoxically portrays human victory, the capacity for recognition of suffering and fellow compassion.

In conclusion, the author focuses on two common characteristics of the three "water wells," both of which are characteristic of the movement to renew the connection to the Self as a psychic space of healing and integration—the first, a sense of surprise and revelation; the second, the inclusion of dialectical opposites. To demonstrate the first characteristic, the author details how each of the encounters was accompanied by a sense of surprise and revelation, which he compares to the symbolic motif of an encounter with the archetype of the self, an encounter with a moose in the thick of the forest. Regarding the second characteristic, in each of the works discussed there exists a dialectic between the power of life and the power of death, a dialectic that helps consciousness expand beyond the threatening division imposed on us by a reality that seems to have surrendered to the power of death alone.

THE TERROR OF REALITY: SEEKING REFUGE AND SHELTER

URI HADAR

In the past few years, it seems that the presence of violent death has become ubiquitous, and not only in the fractious Middle East but in almost every continent—and if not by deed, then by aggressive, even murderous rhetoric. This marks a reality whose absolute horizon is death. Whenever the notion of reality is summoned, intentionally and directly or even unconsciously, part of one's "passive" being-in-the-world, one is exposed to associations of death. And, as we know, associations contain emotional experience. I call this "realty's terror," or the terror of reality, implying not only a specific, literal fear, but also the sense that the very notion of reality, the very experience of the real, encapsulates violence: sometimes well-contained, but increasingly not.[*]

As I discuss this conception, I view violence as comprised of any act or condition that impinges upon an individual's (individual, family or larger group) ability to freely experience his or her full subjectivity (*viz.*, the ability to be reflective, exercise freedom and make choices). Reality's terror is just one manifestation of the fact that so-called "reality" is a highly constructed, even artificial notion, one that is predicated upon subjective, consensual conceptions of what is real, what has "really" happened, whereas, in fact, none of what we imagine when we speak of reality *really* happens *as such,* neither

---

[*] [Ed. Note -- MHS] The title of this essay challenged easy translation. The Hebrew is *ha-te'ror shel ha-me'zi'ut: mif'lat ve-miq'lat.* The subtitle of this essay in Hebrew is *mĭ'flāt vē-mĭk'lāt.* I have chosen to translate the term *mĭ'flāt* as "refuge," which is correct and satisfactory. The Aramaic and Hebrew roots of the term is *pā'lāt* meaning "to slip out, exude, vomit" and "escape," and generally connotes "escape, refuge, fugitive, deliverance, remnant." The Hebrew term *mĭk'lāt* is usually translated as "sanctuary," which carries the older meaning of a sacred place, usually a temple of the gods, that grants refuge, and so the more neutral and equally valid translations, from the Arabic root "to be drawn in, a reservoir, safe harbour," would be "refuge, shelter, asylum" [as in Num. 35:11, 13, 14]. The author's emphasis is on the different modes of *seeking refuge* (*mĭ'flāt*) and *seeking shelter* (*mĭk'lāt*).

interpretatively nor even perceptually. As the philosopher Immanuel Kant (*d.* 1804) argued extensively, and as has been magnified by all domains of postmodern science and art, reality is determined by means of *representation* and is therefore hardly limited by norms or compliant with assumptions. Reality, then, differs from person to person and from culture to culture, but even if we derive it from logical principles, as Kant aspired to do, we still end up with the fact that we live within multiple systems that are quite different from each other—and *all* have a claim to being "reality."

In this sense, reality is not only multiple, but also crucially symbolic, to use Lacan's terminology. That is to say, reality depends on linguistic and logical representation, culture and social constructs. More precisely, the quota of reality of any experience is our ability to match symbolic representation to imaginary constructs. So I explore the related notion of the "imaginary" in the sense that Lacan used it, for whom the imaginary refers to constructs that rely on sense data (Lacan developed primarily the domain of visual imaginary, but it is clear that the idea refers to anything that is constructed of sense data). This consideration of reality bears upon Freud's notion of the reality principle, which is also critically subjective and relies on a person's symbolic and imaginary routines.

When reality becomes imbued with violence beyond a certain level, when it becomes saturated with images of death, the reality principle, in order to earn the title *reality* principle, *must* involve a sense of hostility and impending death; that is to say, it maintains a terror of reality. After a point—and I wonder if we have already crossed that point—this renders the reality principle much closer to the death drive than Freud ever intended. Traditionally, the former implied the ability to sustain subjectivity, while the latter implied its negation. But I argue that, under reality's terror, the two psychic forces converge upon each other and begin to describe similar psychological dynamics, obliterating to lesser or greater extent the subjectivity of the subject.

On the face of it, this can have a debilitating effect, but, I suggest, this terror may also motivate the subject to seek sources of life, of living, of subjectivity that exist within the cracks of such a somber reality. By "cracks of reality" I refer to the fact that, since reality is a *representational* entity, it always involves qualitative fluctuations, errors, blind spots and fictions that render its image inherently torn. In these cracks or tears, the subject can establish islands or a bivouac in which her subjectivity can be preserved and developed. I describe two general sources of restorative, subjective islands: *seeking refuge (*or *flight*) and *shelter.* By *seeking refuge* I mean a movement

outward toward a different 'reality' that eases the pressures of the ongoing conditions. Flight brings the subject to environmental conditions that are less of a familiar community or home, yet more secure. By *seeking shelter* I mean movement into one's home ground, especially by turning to one's own body as a source of stability. Of course, shelter can also be created by building walls around one's home ground, but I do not dwell upon this possibility.

I then describe an Israeli family of four (parents and children)—I refer to them as the Golan family—who lived a very comfortable material life in an upper-class suburb of a central Israeli town. All of the family members were born in Israel and rooted in its culture on many levels. The parents were both highly functional and worked in intensive, high-paying positions. They objected to the current Israeli government since its establishment in January 2023, but the October 2023 massacres in Israel and Gaza tipped the balance of what they were able to accommodate. The October events and the war that followed it encapsulated Israel as reality's terror for them, making it impossible for them to continue living in Israel. After careful and emotionally intensive deliberation, the family relocated to Greece—this was their pragmatic seeking of refuge, or act of flight. I attempt to show that, on one level, this flight was very effective, creating necessary distance between the family and the violent reality of Israel. On another, deeper level, the relocation had a reverse effect of sorts, leaving the family impounded in a strange location and still attached to their internalized sense of Israeli identity. This limited the effectiveness of their flight without, however, completely invalidating it.

I then discuss *sheltering* strategies in which the individual turns to the body in order to derive psychological stability. I compare Eastern and Western attitudes to the body, where the former fosters a tradition of the body as a site of resistance to so-called reality, while the latter holds the body as a center of reality. I claim that attention to bodily life offers shelter for both the Oriental and Occidental mind, but that the body shelter is more liberating in Oriental cultures because they have already encapsulated resistance to reality, while Western cultures tend to the notion of reality in its terrorizing sense. I illustrate this distinction in the manner in which the Golan parents turned to the body: father increased exercise based on heart-lung activity, whereas mother turned to yoga and meditation. I illustrate the advantages of the latter by describing the better adjustment of Mrs. Golan: She had undertaken the change of relocating to Greece in a fuller way than her husband, establishing connections with local neighbors and life in a most day-to-day fashion, accommodating the basic obligations of living and eventually being more

accessible to her children, enjoying better psychological as well as physical health. While this description of shelter brings out the advantages of Eastern approaches to reality and the body, it acts, of course, only as an illustration. The chief benefit lies in showing the multiple ways of creating shelter even if one focuses primarily upon the body. It thus illustrates also the multiplicity of reality itself.

REST AS A NECESSARY TEMPORARY ILLUSION

TSIKY COHEN

The article is written from both a personal and psychoanalytical perspective in the shadow of the October 7th attacks in Israel. It addresses a question that is both ontological and psychoanalytic: whether and how the psyche can discover a sense of rest in situations of pain, trauma, fracture, and destruction?

The Hebrew word for "rest" מנוחה (mē'nū'ḥah) or מנוח (mā'nō'āḥ) is rooted both in biblical discourse and in everyday language: it appears as a metaphor for inner calm and physical repose (Ex. 20:11, Deut. 5:14, 11:9, 12:9) and also as a biblical figure—Mānōāḥ, Samson's father (Jud. 13)—who is described in the biblical story as a suspicious, anxious, and restless character. The article suggests that the feeling of rest is not indicative of an entirely stable or static state, but rather a moment of pause and respite that includes some traces of the suffering in whose presence it usually appears almost simultaneously.

In my essay, I offer numerous literary references and therapeutic vignettes that demonstrate how patients also require a pause and a sense of rest from the internal or external world. The central vignette involves a mother of a child with special needs, who holds an illusory belief that through her love and devotion her son will ultimately become a child like all others. The author describes how he was subtly being drawn into the patient's illusion, and reflects on whether psychotherapist and patient were both trapped in a blinding delusional space or whether this was an *essential* illusion that ultimately enabled the patient to connect to her sense of parental competence and to the potential strengths existing in her son. Without this illusion, there would be no rest, no strength, no hope.

I then focus on the relationship between the feeling of rest and moments of illusion. I propose that in contrast to the classical analytic view, which sees illusions as projections, defenses or omnipotent fantasies of ultimately distortive tendencies, illusions can also have a deep motivational power that grants a person a sense of hope and resting space in times of suffering and distress. Structurally, illusions serve a unique function by bridging the primary and secondary processes, between the pleasure principle and the

reality principle. They exist in a realm of belief situated at the boundary between fantasy and reality, and as such, they constitute a unique language game (Wittgenstein, 1953). Although illusions lack factual foundation, they do not necessarily contradict the reality principle but act as a kind of leap of faith, as Kierkegaard puts it—a psychic extension of belief that is grounded in deep internal conviction. In this regard, I discuss how Freud (1927), Winnicott (1951) and others described the marginal realm of illusion and its connections to the feeling of rest. I suggest that Freud acknowledged that illusions have the power to provide us comfort and a sense of rest, and that his criticism was mainly of blind and rigid clinging to illusions over time when they no longer serve adaptation and hinder psychological growth and development. Winnicott (1951) also spoke of the developmental value of the illusion given to the infant before encountering reality. The illusion is created in a transitional space, between inside and outside, between self and world. Like Freud, Winnicott also referred in his writing to the importance of waking from illusions, yet he held that the mechanism of illusion itself is neither necessarily distortion nor self-deception but an important means for creative and lively engagement with the world.

After the October 7th massacre, many citizens in Israel felt brutally awakened from a shared collective illusion. The shock stemmed, among other things, not only from the sadism, violence and evil that were so baldly and brutally exposed, but also from the collapse of collective illusions of the possibility, the evidence of peaceful coexistence that had provided a temporary sense of rest. These illusions tend to be grouped under the notion of a "konceptzia," a prevailing conception accepted almost at the level of fact. Among these was the Israeli group illusion that the country is protected absolutely by the strongest and most moral army in the world, and that after the Holocaust of World War II, the Jewish nation would no longer have to declare "Never again!," that the issue of co-existence with Palestinians could be creatively contained, and more. All these notions were revealed to have exceeded the anchors of reality and turned into fantasies and illusions. The collapse of collective illusion led some people, lay as well as professional, religious and nonreligious, to retreat into a dissociative capsule, to withdraw inward in melancholy and disconnect from the horrors outside. Others chose to cling rigidly and self-impressionistically to previous illusions, reorganizing the data to continue fitting their beliefs. There are also those who have adopted new illusions, in the form of relatively radical changes of levels of faith.

I propose that illusions are an essential and inherent part of the mental

well-being of individuals and groups precisely because they provide "spaces of rest" that help absorb the burden of both internal and external life. The question of the value of illusions' function and its relation to the experience of rest depends mainly on the format of the illusions (one- or three-dimensional), the extent to which they are rigid and solipsistic versus dynamic and transformative over time, and the way in which they are used. Disappointments, frustrations, deprivation and helplessness awaken in all of us an awareness of our limits and actual boundaries. Nevertheless, under optimal conditions, this awareness does not destroy the capacity for illusion and helps minimize the damage done by even brutal awakenings, just as the capacity for illusion does not obscure the clear and distinct perception of reality.

IN THE ABSENCE OF REST: THOUGHTS ON THE COLLAPSE OF THE TIME OBJECT, ON CLOCKS AND SHELLS.

INBAL KLAINER

Over six hundred days have passed since October 7th, and Israeli society remains stunned with grief, anxiety and pain, stuck in a state of ongoing stress. The difficulty in finding even a little respite for our souls is, in my understanding, deeply tied to the collapse of the linear perception of time (Freud, 1920) that occurred on that traumatic date. From that morning onward, it seems to many that life endures in a swallowing, distorted, chaotic present, from which one cannot escape. The collapse of the sense of linear time is a characteristic of trauma, a collapse that language can never fully representationalize (LaCapra, 2001). I do not try in this essay to fully encompass that which has no measure. But by observing the experience of time during these days, I attempt to restore something of our ability to conceptualize,* an ability which was also attacked and damaged on October 7th and still struggling to restart or re-engage in the face of ongoing catastrophic reality.

By way of background, the essay begins by outlining the development of the individual experience of time. I describe how prenatal rhythms (Maiello, 2001) and repetitive, receptive maternal presences after birth enable the emergence of basic trust (Erikson, 1950) as a bridge through time that allows one to bear absence with a tolerable sense of expectation. From biological cycles (such as

---

* [Ed. Note -- MHS] As an aside, included with the author's permission, it is worth noting that the Hebrew word for "rest" (מנוחה, *mē'nūʿḥah*) is related by its root נוח (*nō'āḥ*) "rest," "equilibrium," to the Hebrew word for "concept" or "term" (מונח, *mūʿnāḥ*) and "conceptualization," "terminology," and "nomenclature" (מינוח, *mǐ'nūʿaḥ*), and also to the concept of "change," "regret," and "consolation" (נחם, נחמה, *nā'ḥām, nē'ḥā'māh*). These cognates strongly point to a link between the achievement of a basic level of psychic stability or rest (perhaps a form of post-schizoid depressive consolidation) that gradually enables more complex, if initially still concrete (מונח, *mūʿnāḥ* adv., resting flat, placed) language formation and, ultimately, advanced conceptualization. In conditions of trauma, when basic sequentiality has been disturbed or derailed, one can anticipate weakness or failure in the essential capacity to conceptualize.

hunger or sleep), a sense of cyclical, reversible time is formed, and as separation from the object increases, a linear perception of time emerges—directional and future-oriented (Meltzer, 1975). Additionally, layers of public time are also presented which lend social imaginary meaning to certain dates and periods of time, based on the calendaric-ensidic characteristics of time (Castoriadis, 1991). In Castoriadis's worldview, *ensidic time* refers to the domain of natural time and normative, consensual systems, in contrast to *social-historical time,* based on human idiosyncrasy, creativity and the realm of the imaginary. Thus, the experience of time is best portrayed as a complex system composed of objective and subjective, intrapsychic and interpersonal, private and public, conscious and unconscious dimensions (Kernberg, 2008).

In the spirit of Kleinian thought, I further propose that the experience of time, like any human experience, is attributed in unconscious phantasy to an internal object (Klein, 1936). There resides in each human an internal time-object that can be generous and supportive, or persecutory and cruel, in varying degrees. Two fundamental characteristics of this internal time-object are emphasized: First, the degree of synchrony between its various aspects. When rhythmic harmony exists among different time dimensions, time is experienced as a regulating, stabilizing, and integrating internal object. In contrast, situations lacking synchrony between the various aspects of time provoke distress. Time then becomes a destabilizing and fragmenting object, potentially leading to psychological collapse.

A second characteristic of the internal time-object is the extent of freedom it allows the psyche to travel toward both past and future. When such freedom exists, time is experienced as a generous and flexible internal object that supports creative movement across its dimensions, temporarily relaxing linear regularity in favor of a timeless mental quality, unfettered by strict rules of causality and directionality (Freud 1933). In the absence of such freedom, time may bind the person to the past through depression, or compel one to relive traumatic events by forcing endless repetition, or pin a person to the present in obsessive rituals. In these situations, time appears as a strict, demanding, and rigid internal object.

Building upon these foundations, I then characterize the experience of the time-object since October 7th. Based on observations of new public clocks that began counting time from 6:29 a.m. on the Jewish holiday of *Simḥat Torah* (the last day of *Sukkot*), and diverse private testimonies of desynchronized time experiences, repeated in all forms of national media, and disruptions of the subjective experience of time, I believe that the time-object since October

7th has taken the internal form of a deceptive, absent, and abandoning figure. Furthermore, an examination of the use of three key time-related terms during the current period reveals how the time-object has become untrustworthy, even sadistic, repeatedly used as a device of torment. The experience of time since October 7th is as destabilizing and cruel, into which past traumas are compressed into a threatened and disintegrated present, and above all, devoid of future.

Given this, I confront the next question: What role does the future play in our lives? In a reality of existential threats, escalating violence, an ongoing war with no evident regional plan, and without an urgent agreement to return the hostages—can a "good" time-object be restored? In the effort to answer, I propose a radical departure from linear time, through devotion to prehistoric time, in order to reveal and retrieve from it what I call "shells of a sense of future." I propose here for the first time the term *future shells* in reference to a form of a psychic time capsule preserved over time, that contains treasured "items" (values, memory, images) with a potential of life to be realized in some future time. The term I selected is inspired by prehistoric shells of viviparous mollusks found at the prehistoric site of Gesher Be'not Ya'akov in Israel, a bridge that spans the last natural ford of the Jordan River between the Korazim Plateau in northern Israel and the Golan Heights (Gonen Sharon, 2016). The term is demonstrated and expanded through a clinical case, illustrating how such a *future shell* can reanimate psychic movement across a frozen timeline, thereby contributing to a healing momentum of synchrony among time dimensions.

Finally, as an inspiring act of creative agency, the essay presents an act created by Gadi Moses, 80 years-old, held by Hamas terrorists for almost 70 weeks in Gaza under conditions of extreme deprivation and isolation. The future shells he carried in his soul during captivity offer a generous, flexible internal time-object that enabled transcendence from a terrifying present, saturated with death, toward a horizon of peace and creative life in the space shared by us and our neighbors.

THE COURAGE TO DWELL IN EMPTINESS:
ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF ARCHAIC NARCISSISM
AND THE OPENING OF A GATEWAY TO ULTIMATE REALITY

GABRIELA MANN

The paper describes a state of mind that enables the attainment of inner repose, inspired by the writings of psychoanalysts from various schools. What unites these perspectives is a movement toward an "absolute reality" — one that recognizes the transient, empty, and ever-changing nature of phenomena.

The notion of "finding rest" refers not simply to physical relaxation but to a mindset in which the self experiences safety, release from defensive effort, and freedom from conflict or emotional flooding. In such a state, archaic narcissistic defenses subside, anxiety diminishes and the mind can remain compassionate and equanimous. While the term "rest" is not a standard psychoanalytic concept, numerous psychoanalysts have described comparable states under other names. Freud (1912) spoke of "evenly hovering attention" as a stance in which the analyst does not direct her attention to particular details but attempts to welcome all impressions equally. Bion (1967), without explicit reference to Freud, developed the principle of working without memory or desire, a seemingly paradoxical notion for a professional listener yet aimed to generate conditions for intuitive knowing. He later introduced the concept of 'O' to designate moments of unity with ultimate reality, beyond projection or projective identification. For Bion, such a position suspends splitting and reactive engagement, allowing the mind to be inspired by its infinite potentiality.

Winnicott (1971) described the transitional space as an experiential area between internal and external reality, where paradox is tolerated rather than resolved. Flight into split-off intellectual reasoning, he suggested, sacrifices the paradox itself altogether, rather than wrestling with it creatively. Eigen (1981, 2012) reinterpreted the transitional phenomena as the Area of Faith—an experiential domain in which trust can prevail. His vision of the "Shabbat of the soul" conveys an inner peace in which there is no need to communicate or to search for meaning. It provides an "unknown" background support. Such a

state of mind contrasts with the repetitive labor of analytic interpretation.

Kohut (1966, 1982) described five transformations of archaic narcissism into mature narcissism—empathy, creativity, humor, acceptance of transience and wisdom—and designated the transformed form of narcissism as Cosmic Narcissism. In Kohut's view, when the cohesive self feels sufficiently secure to relinquish personal narcissistic aims, it may enter a supra-individual mode of participation in the world akin to Bion's 'O.' In this state, the self is able to dissolve personal boundaries and merge with a larger whole.

An illustration of this line of thinking is the contrast between the destructive, conflict-laden Oedipal mode as classically defined *versus* an Odyssean mode that is characterized by mutual empathy, compassion and selfobject functioning. The idea of supra-individual participation reappears, in slightly different form, in Symington's (1995, 2007) distinction between Noumenon and Phenomenon, based on Kant's (1781) philosophy. Noumenon refers to novel perceptions found by recognition of an ultimate reality, whereas Phenomenon refers to perceptions that cling to conventional reality. Symington suggested that the psychoanalyst should recognize the Noumena so as not to become trapped in trivial, meaningless concrete facts. This awareness, he argued, requires courage: the willingness to face the painful truths of existence. Clinically, it frees the self from restricting bondage and aligns it with ultimate reality.

Togashi (2020), influenced by Zen Buddhism, extends these ideas in his theoretical conception of *Psychoanalysis Zero*—an approach in which analyst and analysand surrender to emptiness and suspend preconceptions in order to encounter what emerges in the moment. This state of mind is intended to counteract the analyst's impulse to "repair" the patient according to her personal theory and instead fosters ethical receptivity to whatever unfolds.

Finally, Israeli psychoanalyst Raanan Kulka (2010, 2019, 2025) has evolved a theory that integrates Kohutian thought with Tibetan Buddhist principles, reframing selfobject experiences as a vehicle for supra-personal belonging, compassion and solidarity. He links surrender to the practice of emptiness, understood not as nihilism, but as recognition of profound interconnectedness.

A clinical vignette illustrates this process of touching ultimate reality: A long-term patient, confronted with her son's adoption of an ultra-religious way of life at odds with the family's values, chose in a charged moment not to assert her discontent but to accept the son's radical transformation. This intuitive, wordless choice marked a leap from her usual rigid maternal ideas toward recognition and tolerance of his otherness. She recognized that

if her son adopts a different religious or spiritual belief system, she will venture there as well—not *with* him literally, but by adopting a new state of mind in her own life. This moment represented a release of her maternal archaic narcissism and rigor, and transcendence into a compassionate state of mind. The transformation occurred not through classical interpretation but through shared presence of the analyst and the patient in the ultimate reality of motherhood.

Transforming archaic narcissism takes courage. It is not heroism in the conventional sense, but the courage to embrace the deepest convictions of one's nuclear self. Such courage withstands archaic grandiosity, sustains equanimity and allows the self to bear life's impermanence without collapsing into defensive splitting. In this sense, such change is both a psychological and spiritual achievement.

The movement toward "finding rest" is thus a psychic-spiritual transformation from archaic, self-centered narcissism to a mature, compassionate, supra-participating self. It does not signify withdrawal from life but the capacity to be at peace with oneself and to live lucidly in relation to impermanence. This state of mind, grounded in courage and cultivated through the analytic process, offers a distinctive form of rest: the quiet strength to inhabit existence without the need to control it, and the clarity to meet whatever arises with compassion and presence.

In the current state of Israeli society, repose may appear to slip beyond our grasp, at times seeming unattainable. Yet it is vital that we continue to guard these reflections within us as an inner ideal; a possibility of being that guides our work of transformation, containment, and the renewal of hope.

PEACE OF MIND AND PEACE OF SOUL—WINNICOTT'S POTENTIAL SPACE AND FRANÇOIS CHENG'S "MEDIAN VOID"

DAVID KITRON

Two variations of intermediate or transitional zones, one derived from psychoanalysis and the other from Taoism, are defined in my essay and suggested as spaces or modes of respite for the tormented spirit. To begin with, I elaborate on the meaning of the concept of the "median void" derived from eastern, Taoist philosophy and its various implications for cultural and creative-artistic domains. The concept is derived from François Cheng's poem, 'The Median Void,' that poignantly describes an infinite space, separating yet connecting contrasting elements: the passing flint from the eternal flame, the clinging caterpillar from the falling leaf, the cry of the lost child from the waiting mother.

François Cheng (1929-   ) was born in Nanchang and moved to France at the age of 19, and is a Sino-French philosopher, poet and calligrapher who studied with the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan during the 1960's-1970's, working with him to translate Chinese texts, leading to some of Lacan's thoughts regarding word morphemes and picture images. After that period, Cheng turned to writing poetry (2004) and several meditations on spiritual transformation (2000). Cheng regards *the space in-between*, embodied by his concept of the median void, as the essence and center of existence, in very much the same way that Winnicott had argued for the potential space, the transitional zone, as the place where we live (1971) and the location of cultural experience (1971).

For Cheng, the median void is not an absolute absence, but an essential, dynamic and fertile space where the vital, complementary forces of the universe, of Yin and Yang, interact, transform, and evolve. Thus, this apparent void allows for balance, harmony and mutual existence, a sanctuary of rest for the troubled soul. Cheng sometimes referred to this as the "middle" kingdom, with reference to one of the ancient names of China. Further, parallel to the median void, I discuss Winnicott's transitional space, especially in terms of the search for mental, spiritual peace, tranquillity and serenity.

In my estimation, Cheng's and Winnicott's writings bridge the gap between, respectively, eastern philosophy and western thought, paradoxically by accentuating the very notion of a gap as the heart of being. Cheng, inspired by Chinese Taoism, presents a united, all-encompassing view of human life and the universe interacting together, i.e., each and every thing are interconnected and interwoven, holding and being held. It is the primal breath which lies at the foundation of this universal unity, and this primal breath inspires the periodical yet ongoing cycle of creation and movement. This represents the *Tao*—the Way, and also the Source. As such, this breath must also be the key to the mind and the soul's search for relief, for a place of respite. This "way" consists of a triangular movement, that is, a flow of three breaths or modes: Yin, the masculine mode; Yang, the feminine mode, and the Median Void, which is the sole medium through which Yin and Yang interconnect and unite in infinite forms of benign, creative interaction.

In light of the above, therefore, the median void is implicit in and presupposed by every interaction of Yin and the Yang, indispensable for the holistic process of fruitful transformation. Put differently, the median void is the origin of the primal breath, the source and reason for universal harmony, which could not be achieved by mere dualistic (binary) conceptualization, solely juxtaposing the Yin and the Yang, It is in what we might call "the reign of the interval" that humankind can find the much longed-for repose. In this reign, which is a no-man's land, conflict-free, open, empty and free, lie the conditions that enable one to breathe, to be, in a creative, transformative mode. This interval dimension did not remain a matter of merely philosophical reflection in Taoist culture but was also, and remains a source of inspiration in the aesthetic-artistic sense, as in both Chinese-Taoist painting and poetry we can find the ongoing creative interaction between two entities.

Winnicott strongly believed in the crucial importance of potential, transitional space and phase and their vast implications, both theoretical and clinical. This zone was envisioned by him as indispensable for meaningful and creative life—and I add, *restful* living. It is for the same reason that Bollas (2013) argued that Winnicott paved the way for a linkage between Western and Eastern philosophy, in the broadest, metatheoretical sense, deep in the fundamental *Weltanschauung* of both worlds. Winnicott emphasized the preverbal, stressing the importance of the earliest developmental phases, highlighting the mode of Being as primary to Doing. In his explications, Bollas refers to the Western mentality of individual leadership versus the Eastern mentality of gardening, which corresponds so nicely to Winnicott's strong

belief in the facilitating environment as the soil for the natural, maturational processes.

Furthermore, Winnicott's very style of writing resembles the Eastern poetic one, in contrast with the organized, narrative-oriented Western style. Of major importance in Winnicott's thought is the unique value of silence, embodied by what he termed the "incommunicado" core of the self. For Winnicott, the unspoken is not always a deficiency but a potential reservoir of authenticity. This corresponds beautifully with both Tao or Buddhist appreciation of stillness, emptiness and non-action (*wu wei*, the harmonious state off free flowing and effortlessness; the wisdom of right timing and alignment) as yet another aspect of a refuge of sheer privacy and calmness. Winnicott taught not to seek an absolute answer to the paradoxical question of whether the subject created the object or whether the object was already there, in existence, "waiting to be found" by he or she who-was-to-become-the subject (that is, made available by being "destroyed" [and rendered symbolized] during the odyssey from mere object-relatedness to object usage[*]). Cheng describes, from his standpoint, a very parallel process, recounting the story of the mythological Mount Lu. In the myth, the mountain reveals itself to the spectator once the fog surrounding it is suddenly dispersed. In Chinese poetry, the very act of perceiving the mountain is directly bound with the mountain revealing itself, *as if it must be watched in order to be seen even as it comes into being*. This view seeks to emphasize that, in some sense, the mountain must have some kind of wish to be revealed so that it can be described as "lying in wait," expecting to be observed. We can thus see (!) that a *wish to be seen, seeing* and *being seen* are thus intimately interwoven, perception requiring harmonious mutuality. In Merleau-Ponty's (1968) terminology, the viewer cannot possess the object, that which-is-viewed, unless possessed by it at the same time, unless he is of it.

Such mutuality and equality, denying any control, any hierarchy and any power struggle, fits quite consistently with our quest of repose and harmony as

---

[*]   [Ed. Note -- MHS] Bear in mind that Winnicott used these two terms quite idiosyncratically, since for most writers who began to use the language of object relations theory—at the time, not yet a declared theoretical orientation, and deeply mired in the Melanie Klein-Anna Freud controversies—"object usage" was deemed a more primitive, drive-and-need oriented mode as opposed to "object relationship" which was viewed as a deeper, more resilient mode, already on the road to internalization of the object. This is, of course, how these terms are used today. Winnicott seems to have wished to emphasize the vitality of an inner object that could finally be *used* vigorously without fear of hurting or destroying it.

states of rest. Needless to say, this achievement requires an earlier achievement of a conflict-free state of affairs—the work of psychotherapy as well as other forms of spiritual searching.

The quest for refuge, for peace and relief for our aching, tormented and haunted souls, can take the individual either to the Taoist in-between *median void,* or to Winnicott's in-between transitional objects and phenomena. Either approach beckons to the undefined, boundary-less, non-committed spaces, or, using Bromberg's (1996) concept, of *standing in the spaces*. In the therapeutic encounter we than experience a feeling of repose and respite from "the 'anxious mentation' [that] so often filled the hour" (Ogden, 1994, p.76). In everyday life, we can experience such fulfilling emptiness either by the aid of deliberate practice of meditation and mindfulness, or by simply meandering, lingering, refraining from teleological activity and the so-called productive filling of time (in Dutch, there exists a paradoxical verb, *te niksen*, meaning "to [do] nothing").

I introduce the Buddhist concept of *Bardo* as another concept of relevance. The Bardo signifies a gap, a temporal interval, suspension, creating an intermission between past and future events. Thus, Bardo as well signifies an open but undefined space, neither this nor that. I compared this concept with that of the "the framed gap," the term Marion Milner (1987) suggested to describe a state in which we are free from the need of practical, expedient action. This state signifies a physical and symbolic setting where immediate action is suspended, allowing introspection and, ultimately, restorative rest.

In sum, I suggest that a space paradoxically "filled" with emptiness is necessary in the overall reply to the increasing plea for mental repose. Such a location should be undefined, in the sense of being open, clear, free of any interferences, demands, commitments, intrusion and any other "influences" or pressures. While this might seem utopic, I believe that both Cheng's median void and Winnicott's potential space presume the possibility and desirability of such places. Those two comforting concepts, while derived from different disciplines, can offer the answer to our quest, in the fashion of "Good news from far away is like cold water to the weary soul" (Prov. 25:25).