

level as a self-defining "it," outside the bounds of human interrelating. This creation of false self unrelatedness re-creates something of that disconnection that prevails in some homosexuals' childhoods, with the heterosexual de-subjectifying himself in order to accommodate to the gay.

Readers of homosexual fiction will find a searing, often moving, and frequently tough-minded critique of the arena and its cruisers. I have no doubt that many in the homosexual community of writers often appraise the arena and the erasure of the subject as an affliction, perhaps as an illness of place. The resolution to the false self adaptiveness on the heterosexual's part does not lie in a misplaced pluralism which results in viewing all aspects of gay culture as simply a different order of things. Ironically, those heterosexuals who do shrug their shoulders when considering the arena—blithely claiming it is a matter of a comparative cultural anthropology—simply academize the false self, ensuring that some homosexuals remain an "it" to whom one grants a reserved space in an apartheid bounded by genial unrelating.

Finally, I trust that the spirit of this text makes clear what I consider problematic to the cruiser's world: an erasure of self that is relived in the arena, a place which seems to symbolize an inner experience endured by some homosexuals in relation to the mother, even though some may only rarely be cruisers. Through steady relationships, with the support of the gay liberation movement (particularly in men's groups), and in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, distressed cruisers have been able to work through unconscious participation in their own elimination. I do not believe that any homosexual going to a sauna, disco, or park seeks the cruiser's death sex; if the search is to find a partner or to seek intimacy, then the homosexual is simply courting. Rather than being characterized by the aesthetics of space, the arena exists in the cruiser's frame of mind. A cinema for one homosexual is a place to watch the film; for another it is the arena.

8

Violent Innocence

During the McCarthy era, when left-wing and liberal writers and artists were brought before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), Arthur Miller wrote his play *The Crucible*. He used the Salem witchcraft trials of some two hundred and fifty years past to voice outrage over a persecution taking place in the present.

From the congressional investigator's point of view, the issue at the HUAC hearings was whether or not those subpoenaed before it had ever engaged in activities that were un-American. Were they guilty of holding views and participating in meetings which in any way expressed the cause of other than American ideologies? If so, they should confess and redeem themselves before the nation by recalling the names of those people with whom they had discussed their ideas, in some cases thirty years before.

In *The Crucible*, when the Reverend Parris's daughter takes ill some townsfolk discover that she and several friends have been dancing in the woods and conclude that this must be the work of the devil. The Reverend Hale is called from another town to determine whether Betty Parris's symptoms are the devil's work. The audience knows that the Reverend

Parris has happened upon the girls, one of whom was dancing naked: an erotic realization, shall we say, not beyond the realm of his dreams. Within moments of the opening scene Parris confronts Abigail, the girl who will ultimately lead the persecution and hanging of her elders. He tells her that he "saw a dress lying on the grass," and Miller has Abigail reply, "[innocently] A dress?"—forcing Parris to repeat his perception: "[I]t is very hard to say.] Aye, a dress. And I thought I saw—someone naked running through the trees!" Abigail protests vehemently, "[in terror] No one was naked! You mistake yourself, uncle!" The more Parris asserts what he saw, the more violent is Abigail's innocence.

Abigail is lying, and in a brief meeting with some of the other girls she demands that they "shut up." Her deviousness is somewhat understandable, as she fears a public whipping for her erotic dancing; but, as we discover, she is also the victim of a denial, when John Proctor—the man who ultimately leads the opposition to Abigail and who is hanged for it—disavows any knowledge of their having had sexual intercourse when Abigail lived with the Proctors. One can sense her fury, impotence, and bewilderment over his apparent innocence.

In the third act of the play, to my mind the most harrowing moment in American drama, Abigail is confronted by Mary Warren, one of her girlfriends. Mary reveals the girls' culpability, and an infuriated Abigail assumes the position of innocent witness to the presence of evil, as, stricken, she says, "A wind, a cold wind, has come." In the seventeenth century this signified the presence of the devil, and everyone looks at Mary, who—"terrified, pleading"—yells, "Abby!"—knowing now that Abby is setting her up to embody evil. Eventually Mary joins the now hysterical group of young girls who mime the devil's somatic influence.

Those of us who are American may do well to consider the functions of innocence within our history, from the time when the first Puritans were to found a "city upon a hill" to

cast a saving light across the Atlantic and deliver the Europeans from doom, to something as recent as the 1988 presidential elections, when the leadership of the Republican party used the gesture of the simple pledge before the flag as a sign of one's Americanism, of one's innocence of un-American elements. It was interesting to see how this simplifying of consciousness—a trait of the innocent position—led to the successful location of disturbing phenomena (the debt, the homeless, pollution) in the Democratic candidate, who then represented the disfigurement of innocence: he was a gloom-monger, only focusing on what wasn't consistent with innocence; he was, in short, un-American.

The Types of Denial

All psychoanalysts are familiar with denial: the analyst's unconscious need to be innocent of what is often most troubling. Freud introduced it as a defense when discussing the boy-child's denial of the absence of a phallus in a girl, possibly a first step in a move to psychosis, as this affects the subject's grasp of external reality. The psychoanalyst's effort is directed toward uncovering the distressing ideas and affects that mobilized a denial in the first place, and although this is one of the most primitive defenses—in that very little ego work (i.e., symbolization or substitution, etc.) is employed—the analyst will of necessity resist the analyst's patient work, and over time the resistance will lessen and the denied content will enter consciousness.

Each of us is aware in ourselves of the workings of denial, although it can be frustrating for the other who aims to bring a denied content to the subject who "does not want to know," denial is not ordinarily considered within the framework of object relations theory. This is often as it should be. If a subject denies a perception, he does so because it troubles

him. Abigail initially denies any knowledge of dancing naked in the woods because this recognition disturbs her, although here we are not dealing with unconscious denial. Her denial of what took place troubles the Reverend Parris, and we can see how her refusal to validate what both of them in fact saw forces Parris to struggle: he does not really want to talk about this. If only she will admit to it, and apologize, then he can explain to his neighbors that the disturbance in his household is nothing more than the miscreant work of adolescence.

But Abby changes the scenario when she becomes a radical innocent, disavowing responsibility for her actions, accusing the village elders of acting on behalf of Satan. When she becomes what we might term a violent innocent, she passes her crime into the other, who now stands accused. A denial of reality has now entered the field of interrelating at a dynamic level as the subject insists that the other bear an unwanted perception. The transitional moment from simple denial to violent innocence can be seen, in my view, when Abby's denial compels Parris to say more. As Parris speaks about what he has seen, Abby subtly suggests that Parris's perception derives from his desire. As he struggles to get her to own up to her actions, she uses the theater of innocence to identify him with the very accusation he brings. Indeed, he barely escapes persecution when Abby blames Satan for having them dance in the woods.

Violent Innocence

What takes place in the act I term violent innocence? In some respects the elders and adolescents compete to repudiate the experiencing self, each side claiming the authority to objectify the crisis in the collective mind of the closely knit village. But John Proctor has given in to his lust, just as the girls have yielded to shared erotic enactments, and it is

such simple self states that are now condemned, indeed blamed on the work of the devil. By being innocent the subject provokes the other to speak the truth and sometimes sustains innocence in order to maintain some contact with the repudiated content. By provoking the other, the violent innocent stirs up distress, ideational density, and emotional turbulence in the other, a simple self sponsored by the sadistically cool and "objective" complex self, detached from the other's anguish. Later I will examine this situation in terms of the psychoanalysis of a particular individual, but vignettes of this process, in ordinary situations in life, may help to bring my topic into sharper focus.

(A)

Mary and John are sister and brother. Mary is fifteen and John is nine. As a recurrent expression of her sibling hate Mary stirs John up, out of sight of the parents, in order to get him into trouble with the mother and father. "Come, get him into trouble with the mother and see if you John, let's play army. Take your peashooter and see if you can hit anybody," she says, and then leaves John to shoot at an "enemy" while removing herself to another part of the house. "What are you up to?" queries her mother, passing by the sewing room, as she sees her daughter there. "Oh, I'm making some napkins for the table," she replies. "What a nice thing to do," says the mother, who now proceeds up to John's room, thinking she had seen something that looked like beans dropping from his window. Upon entering the room she finds John, head out the window, "shooting" at cars and people passing by. "What are you doing?" she cries. Caught in the act, he whirls back into the room. "What is that in your hand?" she yells. "It's . . . I . . . was . . . Mary and I are playing army." "No, you aren't! You are shooting peas at people, and anyway Mary is busy being helpful, not mischievous." "Ask her! Ask her! She said for me to do it."

In another place, the three of them together: "Mary, did you get John to do this?" Now, a good enough sister might at this point confess, and her younger brother, although having been the devil, will no longer be a solo venturer in crime. A not good enough sister might innocently say, "John, don't be silly. I've been sewing this last half hour." If so, Mary will have passed her impishness to the brother by eliciting his criminality in order to get him into difficulty (as well as to express her instinctual life) accomplished by her absolute innocence.

(B)

At a dinner party seated near Veronica, Isabel, and Harold, Edward is irritated by the attention being given to Harold. He knows that some five years ago Veronica and Harold (now married) had been close to ending their relationship because, at a professional conference in São Paulo, Harold and Isabel nearly had an affair. Over time, however, the three have managed more or less to forget about this episode. Earnestly requesting Harold's attention, during a lull in the conversation when Veronica and Isabel turned to attend to Edward's inquiry, Edward says, "Harold, Harold, Harold. Tell me. I have to go to São Paulo next month. I think you have been there, if I remember. What is it like?" If we assume further that Harold is not sure whether Edward knew of the episode, Edward may successfully appear perfectly innocent and Harold may suddenly find himself, as will Veronica and Isabel, in a rather tough situation. Harold may try to evade this by saying, "Oh, it's quite nice, Edward. Super place. Do go there. Be a good chap and pass the salt, will you?" And Edward may let it drop at that if he is satisfied that he has passed his discomfort, irritation, and vulnerability into Harold. Perhaps his sadistic intent is greater, however. "Would you like the pepper too? Some more wine?" See

how helpful he is! "But you seemed a little ill after your trip to São Paulo. Was it an unpleasant experience for you?" "No, Edward. I was fine, just tired," etc., replies Harold, now clearly being pinned to this position by aggressive innocence.

Perhaps these stories have at least indicated the object-relational phenomenon which I wish to study. Now for Jessica.

Jessica

A stocky, red-haired, and assertive woman of thirty, Jessica came for analysis because she had been referred by a colleague of mine who found her behavior in a professional setting difficult. This, at least, was the pretext. In fact, she had had a period of psychotherapy with an analyst some years before, but she was convinced that he gave up on her because she was so deeply frustrating.

The cause of the previous analyst's frustration was not at all bewildering to me: some two months or so into the analysis I noted that Jessica corrected and eliminated virtually all of my comments, though occasionally they lived a short while when she would say nothing disconfirming in reply.

In the consultation I had found her pleasant, although very formal, even rather arrogant, but I assumed this might be because analytical encounter is anxiety-provoking. At the least, I thought, she is very proud and not very pleased about the way that she has been referred to analysis. In the first sessions she talked in a highly self-composed way about her upbringing and her marriage. She had grown up in the Lake District in an upper-middle-class family. Her mother was a well-meaning but anxious woman who had devoted much of her life, it seemed, to Jessica, and toward furthering her husband's modestly successful political career. Jessica had been the favorite of five children; she was the second

in line, with a brother two years older, two younger sisters, and a youngest brother. Her father had thought well of her when she was a young girl, and she often preoccupied herself with his career and his interests. For example, he became semi-expert in the politics of Northern Ireland, and Jessica read up on this and was even invited by an Irish youth group to participate in a conference on Irish affairs. Her father thought this unwise, and because he was worried she might be abducted, he forbade her to go.

In early adolescence she began to do poorly in school, and although she passed her O levels, she never achieved the level of ability anticipated either by herself or by her family. She recalls feeling proud of herself for being at school and admiring the way she looked in the school uniform, but she could not get to work because she often felt quite blank. Her greatest passion during this period was her disgust with her older brother, whom she considered physically repulsive and socially uncouth. In sessions she would complain about his personal ineptness and describe in vivid and near-photographic detail his habits, mannerisms, and personal appearance. She fought back tears with vengeful sarcasm as she detailed her efforts to get her brother to shape up enough so he could accompany her to important social events.

Because she was disappointed with the “losers” who constituted her social set, she cast her gaze far afield, and one day it happened upon a solicitor whom she courted because she could see that he was going places. She did not find him attractive and was not in love with him, but to marry him would be a victory over all that she despised in the world—not least her family, who by her late adolescence were all disappointments.

Session after session was taken up with graphic details of her husband’s ineptitude. She would take twenty minutes to describe his efforts to do the washing up: how he spooned the leftovers into the bin with a wimpy fear that he might

splatter himself, contorting his body to avoid such a mishap; how he pathetically tried to engage in a conversation with friends at dinner, utterly misunderstanding the essence of the conversation and ruining the meal.

In describing these events she conveyed her contempt for him (or the brother), but whenever I endeavored to identify her feelings, she always disowned my comment. She once took some ten minutes to tell me how pathetically incompetent her husband was when he tried to fix the car. “He infuriates you,” I said. “What makes you think I am infuriated by him?” she replied, quite taken aback. “You would put it differently,” I replied, and she said, “I don’t see that what I’ve said has anything to do with my being infuriated, as you say.” On another occasion I said to her over a similar account, “He disappoints you.” She replied, “Disappointment doesn’t come into it. He is the way he is, and I am a rational person who simply sees things as they are. I don’t see where what I’ve said leaves you thinking I’m disappointed in him.” “Perhaps I overstated it,” I replied. “It’s more accurate, do you think, to say you were disappointed in his actions at the time?” She replied, “I wasn’t, no. I simply think he was inept, it’s the way he was, but I didn’t have any feelings about it.”

These interchanges between us were frequent, and I was left perplexed by her seeming inability to acknowledge what appeared to me to be clear expressions of feeling. I also found her denials irritating, particularly as she became even more arrogant and condescending in her manner, although she was manifestly polite and formal with me. When I collected her from the waiting room, she arose from her chair as if descending from a throne, did not look at or acknowledge me, and passed to the consulting room like the Queen walking through Westminster Abbey. I had never seen such a condescending person, yet so totally unaware—apparently—of the idiom of being and relating that way.

From the point of view of analysis the situation could have been dire, as in some respects she seemed to lack any degree

of psychological-mindedness; but in other respects, even if unintentionally, she was quite self-revealing. Early on she told me that she invariably thought the most awful things about people and was pleased that she could keep things to herself. She assessed herself as a person with no personality, just a false self, who had never loved anyone or really felt that life was truly worth living. And, as I said, her descriptions of events (at home and work) were not only vividly recalled but rich in unconscious communications. It was simply that whenever I tried to identify her feelings, she always denied them.

I must say now what we all know: a clinical example must pass up so many important details. This is no exception, as I want to focus on a particular feature of her personality and its realization in the transference-countertransference dialectic.

I found that the analytical partnership was the occasion of a split. Jessica would describe an event that was vivid and affectively evocative, but as she denied all knowledge of feeling, I was continuously left to note the feelings derived from her narrations. In time her polite but contemptuous corrections of my reference to feelings quite irritated me. When she described her husband's rather sad yet moving effort to communicate, I identified with his pain and felt cross with her coldness and triumphant destruction of him. I mused how she refused to let him enter her life as she refused me analytical entrance into the world of her feelings. I puzzled, however, over the paradoxical nature of this transference-countertransference dialogue, as Jessica continued to provide me with reports that were virtually to ensure my self state, of which she was apparently innocent.

In the seventh month of analysis she drew my attention to a comment she had made many times before: to the effect that she suffered "fogs" or "blanknesses." "I have a feeling," she reported, "that I am now entering a fog. It's the strangest thing. I have many things on my mind yet I can't think

here," whereupon she gave me convincing notice that she was very likely now to be in silence for months, "and I hope you can tolerate it," she said. I replied that for some reason she made her way into relationships (with her husband and her colleagues) which she sustained as empty shells of life—which I did not understand—but that the analytic relationship was a working partnership and I wondered openly if she really wanted an analysis.

I had never spoken to an analysis like this before. I am accustomed to working with patients who do become silent for long periods of time, but there was never any doubt in my mind that I would not facilitate this for Jessica. This was a considered view, but I felt angry with her announcement and I felt maneuvered by her use of London psychoanalytic lingo about the need for true self states to evolve in an untroubled holding environment. Jessica's announcement came on a Thursday after earlier sessions that week when she had begun to contact some early memories of her relation to her father. I linked her announcement to the previous sessions and to how unsettling they may have been for her, but of course I knew she would deny having any feelings.

In time I was able to see how Jessica's blanknesses were losses of awareness following quite meaningful self disclosures, but my efforts to attend to her anxieties over such disclosures were for a long time refuted by her insistence that such blanknesses were meaningless. Instead I found myself concentrating on the transference, how she provided me with considerable information that authorized my comments but which she turned into my authoritarianism by claiming to be innocent of the knowledge present in my remarks. I was able to link this enactment to the relation to her father, whom she initially admired, then envied, then scorned. I indicated that her moments of innocence left me the seemingly omnipotent father. For a period of the analysis we considered how she found such authority on my part exciting—once again she was dominated by a powerful

father—but later we turned to the unconscious contempt she held for him: if I was content to assume my power from an innocent and helpless child, what kind of a man was I? Jessica responded to both interpretations. She knew that she hoped I would be a masterful analyst and she also knew that she enjoyed watching me struggle against her denials, as she then felt in a place of power with me a kind of helpless fool.

During the course of her analysis these processes and characterological states were meaningfully linked to her ambivalent relation to the father. But I thought I could not leave it there; there was a peculiarity to my countertransference that I mulled over again and again and which brought me back to considering the transference from its pre-Oedipal frame of reference.

The Recipient's Experience

To examine the structure of my countertransference I will exaggerate its overall significance in the analysis of Jessica: what I shall describe will sound more vivid and defined than it was. In fact, recognition of its structure was slow to form and took many sessions before I could grasp it and then put it to the patient.

1. The first feature of my inner state is to be with another, Jessica, who seems pleasant and cooperative. I am pleased to be the analyst and I look forward to working with her.
2. I note a formality to her person in the first session, but I take this to be a sign of anxiety. Over time, however, this formality becomes a deep contempt which elicits states of doubt in me about my analytic competence.
3. I am mildly shocked by the patient's denial that her

descriptions of events suggest the feelings I ascribe to her. These cumulative shocks sponsor a tentativeness in me in relation to the obvious.

4. As the patient often describes a sequence of sadistic thoughts or actions (usually against the husband or a colleague), I find I am privately angered by the patient's gloating descriptions. But as I am in doubt about my grasp of this patient's communications, I am at odds with my affective registrations. The other suggests that my affective response is idiopathic.
5. As time passes Jessica suggests that my comments on her communications are not simply imperceptive but imaginary. But they seem to me to be the very foundations of perception itself. Was I seeing things?
6. Jessica then invariably wanted to know how I had come to my comment. What had she said that led me to my remark? At times this was internally confusing for me, as she intended that I account for what she more or less claimed to be hallucinatory percepts on my part.
7. I felt stirred up by her, transferentially acted upon to a precise effect, but then isolated by her to be the victim of my own affects, which I was invited to see as endogenously bizarre.
8. When I rephrased my comments, I realize, looking back, that I felt as if I was almost pleading with the patient as the manageress of the doors of perception. Would I be admitted? Did she agree that my sense of the situation was linked up to reality?
9. I sensed that the terms of my inclusion into the world of the confirmed—the ordinary—were wholly arbitrary, determined by a power my patient had either to include me or not.

10. In time I found her repeated statement that she had no idea why I thought the way I did was moving me to face the cold terms of her innocence.

11. I was aware of an inclination in me to retreat, exiting through the analytic door marked "neutrality," but I knew this was a halfhearted rationalization for backing away from an intensely organized transference.

In time, a picture did emerge of who or what the patient was in the transference and who or what I was in the countertransference. We reached this recognition fundamentally through my descriptions of the relation between the transference and countertransference. I puzzled out loud over what it meant that she disclosed important information, leading me to virtually certain comments, which were met by a seemingly innocent self who had no idea why I thought the way I did. When she was eventually able to split off a portion of her ego to join me in this observation, she could see that the relation that typified this scenario was the relation to her own mother.¹ At first she had characterized her mother as a nice but somewhat inconsequential

1. How do we know, however, that Jessica's mother was the person she describes? Psychoanalysis quite rightly regards such memories with suspicion. I tread a middle path between the view that such recollections are correct and those positions that inevitably hold that parental object representations are either wish fulfillments or projected parts of the self. For a very long time, indeed, I usually accept my analyst's accounts of maternal or paternal behavior as valid, in order that I may assess whether or not pathologic maternal or paternal behavior seems to consistently serve as the vessel of an unwanted part of the patient's personality, or whether the analysis and acts out said aspects of the parent in the transference. In time the analysis refers less and less to the mother and increasingly to the patient's self. References to the past become less significant. As reconstructions decrease, and as the patient's character is increasingly understood within the transference, the question of what the mother actually did, or who she actually was, fades into its proper place: into the areas of speculation and hypothesis, profoundly tempered by a forgiveness intrinsic to the more important realizations of one's own generated disturbances. I intend to address this important question, of the invocation of the name of the mother in psychoanalytic reconstruction, in a future essay.

woman—a bit of a worrier—but it became clearer that Jessica had diminished the significance of the mother to deal with the mother's lack of rapport with her. I could see that as a child she felt affected by a mother who was disinclined (for many reasons) to assume any responsibility for disrupting or disturbing her child. The mother seemed innocent. Jessica partly resolved this dilemma in relation to her mother by taking aspects of it—a form of early transference from the mother-child relation to the father-child relation—to the father. In particular, she took the child self who was deeply confused and frustrated by a maternal absence (and denial) to the authoritarian father who knew it all and apparently had a reason for everything. By identifying with the father's parenting of the child who is so puzzling (the mother's girl), Jessica placed the dilemma into the structure of a classic interchange between some fathers and daughters: he was to find her a "silly little girl" who could become admirable by following in Daddy's footsteps.

In the transference-countertransference re-creation of this complex family situation, Jessica played the mother to my experience of her child self, inviting me to feel deeply confused, angry, and isolated in the presence of maternal denial of contact. This is to be resolved (according to her) by a role reversal, in which the patient tells me she is really rather stupid, I am a highly esteemed analyst, and I am invited to be the powerful father who with this daughter-patient seals over a very disturbing and disturbed object relation.

Jessica's unconscious representation of the history of her violent innocence eventually revealed her presentation of the effects of a primary object upon her ego, but I do not wish to suggest that this repetition of an early object relation is the sole means of developing a radical innocence. Indeed, another patient, Teresa, in a deep rage over the birth of her younger sister, developed a hatred of reality that evolved into a malicious antipathy toward her father, who seemed

to her to embody the relation to reality. She clearly felt provoked, confused, and isolated by the unwanted arrival of her sister. In her adult relations, and in analysis, Teresa would act upon the other in subtle but persistently aggressive ways, yet whenever confronted she would plead absolute ignorance of the provocation and then proceed to accuse the recipient of bringing disturbing mental contents into her life. We can see that by provoking the other she gives birth to the recipient's injury, stirring up the other to an isolated and frustrated position, accomplished by her refusal to acknowledge her actions. Thus the recipient's isolation within the realities of interrelating is a transference-countertransference invention of Teresa's isolated hatred of reality, as the victim of Teresa's enactments comes to feel an intense discomfort and eventual repudiation of that reality created by Teresa. In this case, a violent innocence develops from the child's own intrapsychic processing of a lived experience, rather than, as with Jessica, from the child's possible repetition of maternal action against the self. Of course, there is always an interplay between the intrapsychic and the intersubjective, and a risk in presenting vignettes such as these about Jessica and Teresa is that a psychoanalysis is oversimplified in order to convey a certain distinction. This inevitable hazard, regrettable though it may be, is an unavoidable feature of any effort, in my view, to isolate single factors contributing to the psychic texture of any person in an analysis.

"Never Mind"

I hope the stories and brief clinical examples have set the stage for a deeper understanding of what I mean by violent innocence. Clearly it is a form of denial, but one in which we observe not the nature of the subject's denial of external perception, but the subject's denial of the other's perception.

We are looking at denial in an object relations frame of reference to see how an individual can be disturbed by the actions of the other that are denied. The analyst can differentiate between an internalized denial that is part of an object relationship and endogenous or simple denial by analyzing the transference and its countertransference. If the patient's denial of perception of reality gradually yields itself to insight through free associations and analytic interpretation, then we are witness to endogenous denial, even if we can trace this denial back to family attitudes. Denial that is part of an object relation works in the transference according to a split, in which the patient induces the analyst to entertain feelings and ideas of which the patient denies any knowledge. It is a dynamic whereby the patient uses the analyst to struggle with feelings that are split off, not in order to have an unwanted mental content detoxified by the process of interpretation, but to inflict upon the analyst a relationship which sometimes re-creates the patient's experience in childhood of facing parental denial.

The violent innocent sponsors affective and ideational confusion in the other, which he then disavows any knowledge of—this being the true violation. The recipient is invited to sink into an intense lonesomeness, where feelings, thoughts, and potential verbalizations have no reception. Here the recipient sits at a doorway, between intrapsychic life and intersubjective existence, where a fundamental question is posed: "Am I alive to the other to whom I speak, or am I to be dead there—in intermediate space—to live only in my carefully managed and dehydrated internal world?" To be the recipient of the other's provocation, an aimless intent until formation occurs through the definition of the object relation (when chaos becomes pathological order), is to be strangely caught up inside the other, then dropped as a dumb dream object that has served its purpose.

The recipient of violent innocence knows little. He has been disturbed by the actions of the other who projects

something into him, or who evokes an unprocessed mental content.

"Never mind," we say often enough as we begin to articulate an idea or feeling. "It's nothing, forget it," we may add. A common enough event in life which may elicit a grunt from a companion who has, perhaps only mildly, been stirred to curiosity. Whatever "it" was that might have reached representation sinks back to its place of origin. But the act of violent innocence stirs the mind, tumbles it about, forces the mind to experience its uselessness, as whatever it is that is being conveyed is unknowable in its form. A mind in action, yet a never mind: a mind that is not to know its own contents. The other who has caused the mind this predicament could clear things up through an explanation of the provocative action. But the innocent gaze, the refusal, disavows assistance and the mental life of the recipient is to have a disturbed useless mind.

This seems to me to be one of the unconscious aims of violent innocence when enacted in the analytical setting. The analyst is coerced into a position where his inner mental state is useless as a means for processing self-other relating. To be there, where mind is useless, is to be in a place occupied by the child whose mind was of no use. As a self state, then, what is a uselessly active mind?

If I am a child of five and unselfconsciously at play, expressing, let's say, my instinctual life, and my mother enters my space, frowns, and indicates irritation but refuses my question as to what is wrong, where am I? Perhaps I will reprocess actions, ideas, impulses, and feelings of the last moments and try to find the cause of irritation. But what if this intrapsychic research meets with no recognition when reported to the mother who remains removed?

Is not intrapsychic work useless? Am I not invited into a speculative projection, a scrutinizing employment full of "mights": it might be this, it might have been that. Then where am I? Am I not slightly at odds with my own mind

as an object? Do I not, then, distance myself from the nature of mental processing as this world of speculative projections, of "ifs" and "mights," fails to relieve me of the psychic pain caused by the other? If I am a child, am I not liable, then, to blank myself, to fog out mental life, to dull my evocative response to the actual object world?

So Jessica's "fogs," which she intended to be our fate, were her traditional response to meaningful sessions which I think elicited desire (and awakened mental life) in relation to the other.

Or, as in the case of Teresa, and returning to the child of five whose mother enters the room, perhaps the child denies maternal comment on the self, and, furthermore, accuses the mother of odd and idiopathic perceptions. As the years pass, the child refuses to accept anyone's mental objectifications of her personal affects, eventually denuding her own mind of its capacity to process her own aggression. In this respect, then, "fogs" or "blanknesses" are the psychic outcome of continuous projective identifications of the child's own mind into the other, who is momentarily left to process the self's aggressive states, and given that the child furthermore repudiates the other's mental processing of the aggression, mental processing is further attacked, eventually leading to a massive lack of contact with the inner contents of the self.

Innocence and the False Self

The psychodynamics of violent innocence are a common place, often seen in marital relations, families, and groups. "Whatever is the matter?" "You don't seem content," are the musical chords frequently played as instruments of violent innocence, when a subject assumes the posture of false wonder to disturb the other. Indeed, this is often one of the more perverse dynamics of pathological group processes.

Imagine an institution of a hundred people. Like so many places, it may be strife-ridden; there are unpleasant rivalries, vicious gossips, and powerful people jockeying for positions of authority. Imagine that its shared fantasy is that it is an admirable place, a cut above comparable institutions. Perhaps I should term this a shared false self that conceals the true states of mind, as the place, let's say, believes it could not survive the truth about itself. But in such a place, though everyone knows how awful some of the dynamics are, each also believes that part of the price of continued admission is to collude with a collective false self. Although privately, to one's closest colleagues and spouses, one could say how it really feels to be part of the place, in the public domain one reckons it is best to say that it is "inspiring" or "stimulating" to be there.

We could say that a violent innocence is present in that each appears innocent of the more disturbing truths that are a part of the place. And those who are exceptionally gifted at false-self technique will contribute to the structure of innocence that climatizes the institution.

Inevitably, though, one, two, or twenty people will at times breach the false self and express views about some of the unpleasant realities. "I see, do you really find it so here?" an innocent may reply to the subject who slips up and speaks. The speaker may be invited to say more, and in a sense actually partly process the conflicts indigenous to the place, but in a split-off manner, as the subject's expressions of feeling are regarded as idiosyncratic formations of feeling and thought.

I recall an institution's group process in which the group would characteristically invite one of its members to express her view whenever the suppressed conflict was in frightful collision with the group's false self. X was the group's "feeler," who could not disguise how she felt, and whenever the assembly needed a type of relief, X was invited to express her pain—which she always did—although the group sus-

tained its functioning false self by nursing X through her affective distress, ensuring that she continued to serve as a split-off receptacle of suppressed psychic pain. Whatever X's personal dynamics were, there was an underlying cruelty to the group's innocent questioning of this member, as she was always stirred up to ideational confusion and affective turbulence by such seemingly thoughtful inquiries into her view of the situation.

To be sure, if one "knows the score," if one knows that the rules of place inevitably involve negative hallucination, then the split between false self and true self in institutional life can be lived with. One must sometimes falsify one's response. "How do you find it here?" "Oh, fine. Invigorating place." Two innocents whose mutual gaze blithely erases the truth which will be its own casualty.

The Illusion of Understanding

The analysand who commits acts of violent innocence does not simply impose an isolation upon the analyst and bring about a disturbed and useless frame of mind. Beneath the structure of the projective identifications that place the analyst, there is a profound despair and an insidious cynicism. How can I describe this?

Winnicott wrote about how the mother facilitates an illusion that the infant creates the world (mostly the breast and the mother herself) out of his own needs and wishes. From this practice comes a sense in the child that the world understands and is shaped by him. This illusion is quietly sustained by the language we hold in common that cultivates an assumption that what we mean when we speak is what the recipient understands through our speech. If I say, "Would you please pass me the paper clip?" and the other does so, I am assured that I am understood. Countless simple transactions of this kind sustain the powerful idea that people

understand one another. In this belief lies a freedom to assume reception that facilitates communication and creativity.

The idea that we understand one another through the different orders of communication is, in my view, largely illusory. In the first place, as Freud has taught us, the conscious self is inevitably only a partly present creature, his unconscious voices speak up now and then, reminding us how little we understand of ourself. Harold Bloom, the literary critic, has argued that literary history is a tradition of creative misperception, as poets and novelists distort, alter, and misread the works of their masters. Norman Holland's research of ordinary readers' responses to literature convincingly demonstrates how we misread the literary object.

These observations might serve a rhetoric of despair, employed to argue that we are hopelessly removed from one another. If we don't understand each other, whatever is the point to communicating? Yet this does not seem to me to be true, even though each of us has repeated conscious experiences of not being understood. How can this be? Why is it not the inauguration of a comprehensive doom?

At the heart of this factor in human life is an extraordinary paradox. Because we do not comprehend one another (in the discreet, momentous conveying of the contents of our internal world) we are therefore free to invent one another.

We change one another. We create and re-create, form and break our "senses" or "understandings" of one another, secured from anxiety or despair by the illusion of understanding and yet freed by its impossibility to imagine one another. This is, I suggest, a double paradox. Because we do not comprehend one another we are free to misperceive—an act of creativity—and so, out of this gap emerges unconscious mental life, or intersubjective play, which brings us closer together. We do not thoughtfully understand one

another any better, or at least not much better, but as we play we come closer to one another.

Two paradoxes and now an irony. It is likely that we are compelled to know more about the other when the illusion of understanding breaks down. During such breakdowns we are forced into reobjectifying one another, renegotiating the terms of conscious understanding of each other; while if the illusion of understanding prevails, we are lulled into countlessly creative, subjectively determined misrecognitions of one another in the interest of deep play.

We have, furthermore, a highly restricted understanding of one another, as so much of what we unconsciously know, about ourself and the other, will remain unthought. Freud cannily realized that the rule of free association employs this paradox: that if we cease the search to discover our hidden thoughts, simply relax and unselfconsciously speak what's on our mind, we shall release meaning into limited understanding through the work of displacement, condensation, symbolization, and so forth. Nowadays I think we must add to this view of free association that interplay of ideas and affects exchanged in the transference and countertransference between patient and analyst. The play of interrelating, the free association of two distinct subjective idioms, will remain largely unthought, though what does reach consciousness (such as through a good interpretation) is prized partly because of its unusual status as a valued fragment of thought knowledge.

We are, however, engaged in unconscious communication with one another. Messages conveyed to a recipient will be unconsciously perceived, and certain deep understandings—those, for example, that constitute the intuitional dialectic of genera formation, where patient and analyst construct a new vision together—are possible, but the very ingredients of unconscious life, the displacing logic of primary-process thought, the distorting effect of ego defense, always mean

that unconscious communications between people are as likely to mislead consciousness as they are to lead it. This is especially so if the recipient tries to convert the subject's unconscious communications into premature conscious sense, as often—though not always—the subject will respond to such effort by further more elusive displacement, condensation, and defense, if the subject senses that too much consciousness of the latent mental contents is close at hand. It is as if the patient's ego, sensing the recipient's ego working to move an unconscious content toward consciousness, resists it, unless the subject is wishing to be understood—in which case there will be a kind of dance of mutual displacements, distortions, affective reciprocities, and psychic gravitational attractions that assist the continuation of shared communicating. In a sense, if the recipient plays with the subject's unconscious messages, a dialectical intersubjectivity is established, as the subject feels free to send his latent unconscious ideas and feelings to the other, as the other will reply in like language, rather than in the imperial palace of conscious logic. It may seem absurd to say that unconscious communication is unconscious, but in this day and age that term is often used to specify the patient's unconscious expression which is consciously comprehended by the analyst; here, though, I wish to emphasize a type of discourse which eludes consciousness for both participants. Certain conscious misunderstandings do, however, emerge from unconscious communication, but these will be less comprehensions of precise mental contents than mutually constructed understandings limited to distinct episodes shared by the participants.

Unconscious communication does not mean surreptitious conveyance of a clear message. It means that the subject engages the recipient in the language of the unconscious, which means that part of the aim of such a language is to deceive and mislead the other. The irony is that such an intentionality is precisely understood by the recipient's un-

conscious, which thinks in exactly the same terms; it is rather like two Balkan merchants shrewdly misleading one another toward a sale in which each feels certain that the other has been well and truly cheated. So, as the other receives the subject's unconscious communications, he will not be able to consciously understand what is conveyed, but he does understand the dense logics of deception, and in this regard he can engage the subject in a similar language. What a curious paradox it is that unconscious communication takes place as acts of conscious misunderstanding ensuring that unconscious discourse survives. But do we not all know this? Have we not all had the experience, in the midst of talking and working our way through some only partly known subjective state, of being brought up short—and suspiciously so—when the other nods and says, "Ah yes, I understand perfectly!" All the more odd, isn't it, when we discover that they have indeed understood our manifest text, and yet we feel that somehow we have not really been heard.

Characteristically, we do not arrest each other in such moments to demand exactitude of thought. Certainly, we may stop each other, question one another, "correct" a misperception (for the sake of the functioning of the illusion, I should add), but human discourse would be the first casualty of exactitude, as the urge to ensure exact understanding would either paralyze the playful creation of one another or lead to a formalization of exchange that expels misunderstanding as it legalizes the exchange of thought.

Inter-knowing, then, is only ever an act of part understanding; its dialectic, in fact, is generated more out of the creatively misperceptive play of imaginations that meet up continuously if enigmatically through the nature of this dialectic. To know, here, is not to understand or comprehend; it is to play, especially to be played by the evocative effect of the other's personality idiom, a correspondence between two unthought knowns.

Unconscious communication is thus a dialectic between two subjects who distort, displace, and condense one another's received communications in the spirit of unconscious play that, like the dream work, only ever represents a part of the psychic truth through a complex medium of wonderfully inventive repudiations. In this sense, not to gather the other into one's consciousness is, strangely enough, to be in touch with the other's otherness, to remain in contact with the inevitable elusiveness of the other who cannot be known, a vital factor in marriages, deep friendships, and good analyses.

The person who becomes a violent innocent may have suffered a rupture in that essential early play with the other in which creative misperception is allowed to be perceptive understanding. (All children need to seriously distort "reality" for a very, very long time in order to "make" the world into a true "psychic reality.") Jessica was not free to play with the mother, who compelled her child into premature realization that we are not capable of understanding the nature of the other's inner self experience, and therefore, by extension, we too are not understood by our primary objects. Infants and children need to believe that the mother knows them from within, a powerful illusion that partly authorizes speech and play, the progressive investments in representational audacity. Forced into a telling isolation by the rupture in the illusion of understanding, Jessica lost the love of speech and play.

Or, as with Teresa, a violent innocent may create a rupture in interrelating in order to take revenge upon reality for "its" injurious provocations of the infant's narcissistic equilibrium. This child will then attack reality by refusing to play with it, accomplished by a continuous assault on the other's attempted play with the self's communications. A Teresa will incessantly point out that the other has distorted her statements or misconstrued her intentions, and by breaking down

units of communication into scrutinized segments of mutual analysis, she can sufficiently deconstruct dialectics in order to prove that she is correct and that the other has wrongfully submitted a perceptual distortion of her exceptionally precise meaning. In a relatively short time the other will abandon the play of interrelating, defeated by the militant presence of a fine-print mentality.

A further casualty of this catastrophic disillusion is the corresponding loss of affective life (in particular the feelings between people) as a secret compensatory alternative to understanding. Sometime in the future we may understand more about feelings as a nonlinguistic system of communicating that generates powerful senses of understanding, even though what is known between any two feeling persons is likely to be ideationally misconstrued constructions. The violent innocent destroys the analyst's feelings that he is in rapport with the patient and so cuts off this partnership from the rhythmic progression of affective interplays that sustains and inspires the participants to creatively misunderstand one another. The life of feelings, a vital constituent to the interplay of two persons, sustains the illusion of comprehension, authorized by the dialectic of unthought knowledge between two subjects and maintained by a degree of realization in all of us that to live a life is to be in some place of inevitable solitude which is unsharable as an idiom, though shared by us all as a common factor in human life.

The violent innocent provokes the other to a uselessly disturbed frame of mind that is left to a defining isolation through the refusal of recognition. In the analytical setting in such a patient may provoke the analyst to interpretation in order to deny the analyst's associations, to stir up the analyst's inner life in order to isolate him. In so doing, the analyst communicates through the transference and countertransference that experience of being with an other who provokes and then departs, innocent of the act of aggression. Finally

such a patient may be attacking the essential illusion underlying human discourse that we understand one another through speech. By forcing the analyst to mind his speech, to eat his words, this analysis and unconsciously seeks to represent either his or his parents' failure to play with misrecognition.

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The Fascist State of Mind

"Our program is simple," wrote Benito Mussolini in 1932. "They ask us for programs, but there are already too many. It is not programs that are wanting for the salvation of Italy but men and willpower" (185). "What is Fascism?" asked Gramsci some ten years before Mussolini's spartan statement. "It is the attempt to resolve the problems of production and exchange with machine-gun fire and pistol shots" (82).

Fascism seemed to simplify the ideological, theological, and cultural confusions that emerged from the failure of the Enlightenment view of man to comprehend human existence. It was, argues Fritz Stern, a "conservative revolution" constituting "the ideological attack on modernity, on the complex of ideas and institutions that characterize our liberal, secular, and industrial civilization" (xvi). Where the Enlightenment had partly emphasized the integrity of individual man, twentieth-century Fascism extolled the virtue of the state, an organic creation driven by the militant will of the masses, a sharp contrast indeed to the federal republic encumbered by checks and balances dividing power so that the people remained individually free to speak their minds in a pluralistic society.