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PSYCHOANALYTIC AESTHETICS: THE BRITISH SCHOOL

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Chapter Six

Art, Creativity and the Potential Space

This chapter will explore how the insights of Milner and Winnicott have considerably broadened the scope of traditional Kleinian aesthetics, and how they both emphasise the importance of a *psychoanalytic creativity* - the role of creative and aesthetic experience in the fostering of psychic growth in both patient and the analyst (cf. chapter four, section five below). Milner's oeuvre is especially significant for it can be viewed as an index of the increasing way in which the psychoanalytic encounter has been increasingly seen in terms of aesthetic value, not solely the resolution of instinctual conflict and neurosis. Indeed, the study of the aesthetics of the analytic encounter has become a distinguishing feature of much post-Kleinian thinking in the British School.¹

Section one, 'The sagacity of the body' will give an overview of the trajectory of Milner's contribution, from her own personal artistic experience as an artist as well as from a clinical perspective, exploring the kinds of themes which have informed her work from the very beginning, when she began her diary-keeping exercise. I have felt it necessary to go into some detail here, for, like Stokes and Bion, Milner's work can be regarded very much as the expression of her personality. Her theoretical contribution is perhaps most fully appreciated when seen in context of her own creative explorations and her autobiographical writing. This section draws largely upon Milner's *On Not Being Able to Paint* (1950), which explores her own painting activities, and in particular, her 'doodle drawings' which helped her to understand the kinds of emotional and intellectual problems faced by the potential artist. Of particular significance is the appendix (added in 1957) which gives her largely pre-psychoanalytic painting and drawing activities a more theoretical, clinical perspective in the light of her subsequent analytic experience.

What is particularly significant in her account, however, is the emphasis on the *epistemological* role of the body and its processes - indeed, her writing becomes increasingly preoccupied with what she calls (after Nietzsche) the 'sagacity of the body', and suggests that the way we symbolise our own bodily rhythms and functions is implicated in the way we conceptualise the workings of the creative process itself - and that this in turn influences the way it works within us. Milner explores the

close relationship between certain aspects of corporeal experience and the production of art by analysing a number of her own paintings and drawings, as well as some of those produced by her patient 'Susan', whose sixteen-year analysis with Milner is recounted in *The Hands of the Living God* (1969). This text poignantly and vividly evokes the inner world of the schizophrenic and yet it can also be regarded as an important contribution to the study of aesthetics, even though it is primarily the case history of a very ill young woman.

Section two, 'Art and the dynamics of intrapsychic illusion', will explore the link between Milner's work on illusion (first fully expressed in the seminal 1952 paper, 'Aspects of Symbolism in the Comprehension of the Not-self') and Winnicott's account of the 'transitional object' and the 'potential space' (1951, 1971) I intend to show how both thinkers were intensely preoccupied with the developmental importance of the infantile illusion, together with the way that the child becomes able to recognise that there is a subjective and objective reality, negotiated by an 'in-between' area which Winnicott called the 'potential space'. This area relates to play, as well as to religious and aesthetic experience in adult life - indeed, the 'whole cultural field', according to Winnicott (1971).

1. The sagacity of the body: Milner's account of creativity

In Milner's early writings we find expressed in embryonic form ideas concerning the creative role of perception and the special kind of interplay between aesthetic experience and body awareness - themes which were to preoccupy her throughout her career. What makes Milner so interesting (and also quite difficult to categorise) is the interplay between her own creative experience, her meditations upon life and the problems of living, combined with many years of clinical experience. Many aspects of her clinical work have been enlightened through her own creative experiences (for example, see Milner 1952, 1969), and this is why it is sometimes difficult to say where one begins and the other ends, for her work is an expression of her varied life experience and interests, including educational methods and problems of concentration difficulties, religious experience and mysticism, creative experience and aesthetics. In fact, the problem of boundaries, of merging and separation is a major theme in her work, as well as providing a good image of the ways in which the many layers in Milner's thinking interpenetrate - and also how her work overlaps with that Winnicott, particularly with reference to the study of illusion.

Milner's first book, *A Life of One's Own* (1934), was based on a diary she kept during the twenties, where she would write about the event which had most affected her each day. Through these reflections she came to recognise what she called the 'wide' focus - a quality of awareness which enabled her to perceive the world with greater enrichment and meaning, and was also found to be connected with an intensified body awareness and a correspondingly heightened perception of reality. This heightened awareness could be reached only through an 'inner gesture' of letting go of the 'narrow' focus (that is, everyday, discursive thinking) and a deeper order would be revealed to her which sometimes had a very frightening quality - almost like a death itself - but when she submitted herself to it, it felt more like a liberation. This 'deeper order' (cf. Ehrenzweig's 'hidden order') was characterised by a sense of more fluid boundaries between self and the world - even to the point of subject-object union. As we shall see, this is a theme which was to play an important part in her writings, as in Winnicott's thinking, especially with regard to understanding aesthetic experience and the way in which creative perception is fostered by a negotiation of the 'gap' between self and other, involving the active surrendering of conscious ego control.

Her second autobiographical book, *An Experiment in Leisure* (1937), explores more fully the nature of this special kind of awareness or attention, focusing especially on the process of surrender and the *phantasies* relating to it. In her effort to enhance her receptivity to the world, Milner searched her memory and her imagination for significant motifs, finding that the images which recurred all related to dying, or tortured gods (for example, Jesus, Prometheus, Apollo, Osiris). Milner asks whether

... the still glow that surrounded some of these images in my mind, images of the burning god, of Adonis and Osiris, did it come because they satisfied surreptitiously some crude infantile desire that I ought to have left behind long ago? I could not believe that it was so, for I had enough psycho-analytical experience to recognise the feeling of disreputable desires ... the kind of thinking that brought these other images was of a quite different quality, it had the feeling of greatest stillness and austerity.²

She believes that the processes which seem sado-masochistic to the ego may actually open up *new* realities, ones which could not be fully explained by psychoanalytic interpretations in terms of id-content; such images seemed to reflect a crucial phase in psychic creativeness, inaccessible to direct language.

Milner's book inspired Ehrenzweig to write a paper about its main ideas, and in his later work, he continued to acknowledge her recognition of an underlying functional continuity in such images, referring to this sado-masochistic phantasy as 'poemagogic', a special kind of imagery which both *induces* and *symbolises* the ego's creativity. According to his theory, poemagogic images 'reflect the various phases and aspects of creativity ... through the central theme of death and rebirth, of trapping and liberation'. This process also mirrors the ego's dedifferentiation and re-differentiation, and represents the interaction of the life and death principles working within the ego.³ It seems that from comparatively early on in her self-explorations, Milner was drawing attention to the poetic intuition of the ego state which is a necessary phase in all creative experience, that is, the temporary and active surrender of conscious, discursive thought.

As we have seen in the last chapter, there was considerable interplay between the ideas of Milner and Ehrenzweig, both finding in one another's work clarification of their own ideas. Just as Ehrenzweig found his thesis concerning the role of the unconscious in creative perception supported by Milner's exploration of a special kind of perception which can enhance the sense of self and the world, Milner found Ehrenzweig's analysis of art and the creative perception very useful in helping her think more clearly about certain aspects of her work with patients as well as her own painting activities. She mentions, for example, how his term 'creative surrender' provided her with a conceptual tool for thinking about boundaries and their merging during the creative process.

Whilst writing the last chapters of *The Hands of The Living God* (1969), Milner was reading the proofs of Ehrenzweig's second book, *The Hidden Order of Art* (1967). His notion that the role of the art teacher is to teach students to overcome their fear of chaos, parallels in the artistic domain what the analyst Charles Rycroft (an analysand of Milner and a prominent member of the British School) was saying in 'Beyond the Reality Principle' about the need to discard the idea that primary process thinking is archaic, unrealistic, unadaptive and chaotic. Also, Ehrenzweig's account of 'unconscious scanning' (what enables the artist to use the subtle powers of unconscious perception of form) also compares to the analyst's need to learn 'free-floating attention'. It also links with what Milner called the 'wide stare' which she discovered was necessary for making meaningful doodle drawings.⁴

In her third autobiographical book, *Eternity's Sunrise* (1987), written some fifty years after *An Experiment in Leisure*, Milner repeats her diary-keeping exercise to see how far her psychoanalytic experience has influenced her perceptions. The book is written around a set of what she calls 'beads' - a collection of resonant images, memories, moments of experience, objects she has bought, paintings, and dreams. What characterises these images is a special feeling of significance and vividness. They are 'organic images' whose impact is related to the state of awareness in which she had first experienced them, a particular state of bodily relaxation and, in particular, consciousness of her breathing. Although this gave her a profound sense of aliveness it led also to a 'darkness' where she felt that her life might be extinguished at any moment - indeed, it was the same fear of ceasing to exist that was described earlier in *A Life of One's Own*. With her clinical experience she can now link these somewhat disturbing elements more directly to 'the very bread and butter of my daily psychoanalytic task with patients' - 'the dread of loss and abandonment, the facing of anxiety and disillusionment, and the hope of true identity' (1987, p. 36).

What Milner continually emphasises in all her writings is that the *quality of perception itself* - the empty, purpose-free hovering - is not simply a way of handling conflict and anxiety, but allows a reaching down deeper into the 'depths of love and creativity'. Throughout her writings, Milner stresses that what characterises vivid perceptual experience is a particular quality of *internal body awareness* (for example, 1955, 1957, 1960). With this bodily awareness, combined with relaxation, there is a kind of passive consciousness of one's breathing - of 'being breathed' rather than breathing - and the giving up of any conscious striving or self-assertion. According to Milner, this is the key to making contact with that 'inner something' - what is both part of her and yet other than herself. In later writings she relates this 'other' to the 'direct non-symbolic awareness of the body', of great significance not just the perception of heightened sense of reality, but also an essential aspect involved in both the production and enjoyment of art.

Indeed, Milner sees the meeting of self and other as being the territory explored by the artist when he engages with his medium. Intimacy with his own bodily sensations and movements is essential, and it is upon the bedrock of his own body, its sensations and affects, that the artist bases his work. Milner stresses how the reciprocating body rhythms are established in infancy through the care of a devoted mother. Likewise, in art, there is a reciprocating interplay with the particular qualities of a chosen medium (whether by sounds or visual shapes) which would be in some form of adaptable medium, like the receptive role of toys in childhood.

In 'Painting and Internal Body Awareness', Milner makes further comments about the role of the body in artistic production⁵. She deploys both her own experience of painting together with some thirty years of psychoanalytic experience to support her claim that artistic creativity, particularly that regarding the plastic arts, is grounded in corporeality. She suggests that it is the inner observation of one's own bodily movements, including 'the effects of deliberately directing one's attention to the

whole internal body awareness' that dramatically enhances perception. She also sees as significant the connection between 'the creation of a work of art and the growth of a vital emotional involvement in the world around one'. It is the 'now-ness' of the perception of the body and thus the perception of oneself that she focuses on - indeed, this is true to Freud's (1923) observation that the ego is first and foremost a body-ego. Milner also emphasises that it is not so much the act of perceiving itself, but rather the deliberate *relating ourselves to our own perceiving* which makes our perceptions truly come alive.

Now we shall turn to Milner's own artistic activities, for not only was she an analyst, but also a enthusiastic painter. She painted a great deal with fellow analysts, Sylvia Payne and Margaret Little, and her work has been professionally exhibited in the West End of London. Her *On Not Being Able To Paint* (1950), as the title suggests, is a highly personal account of her struggles with learning how to paint, which grew out of some doodle drawings she did whilst training as an analyst in the early forties. Although the book was primarily intended for a non-psychoanalytic audience, an appendix was added in 1957, giving a more theoretical, psychoanalytic perspective of her experiences.

The book has proved highly appealing to both clinicians and non-clinicians alike. According to art historian M. Podro, the painter Robert Medley (head of the Camberwell School of Art in the early nineteen sixties) recommended it to his art students. Although it might seem odd to recommend a book with such a title to aspiring artists, Podro believes that by promoting insights such as Milner's, Medley was trying to counterbalance the kind of painting methods that had been instilled by his predecessor, William Coldstream, whose influence was still very apparent in the art school. Podro remarks that Coldstream's distinctive way of representing the world had become, in the hands of his followers, 'a bloodless and rather mannered routine for registering appearances', thus Medley was hoping that insights such as Milner's could help to overcome the 'inhibiting, self-denying stance that had become school orthodoxy'.⁶

Milner found that instinct theory (Freud, Klein) and ego-psychology (Anna Freud, Kris, Hartmann) did not reach the heart of she felt was most important to her own inner experiences of learning how to paint. Ego-psychological concepts relating to 'drive reduction' and 'adaptation' seemed to miss a vital dimension, as did the Kleinian account of art, with its focus on the restoration of lost objects. Milner stresses that creativeness is not simply deployed for *defensive* purposes (as Freud and Klein had emphasised), it is a *condition of subjectivity itself*. Milner, like Winnicott (1971) postulates a 'primary creativeness' which can be explained by nothing outside itself. If a heightened sense of subject-object union is an illusion, then it is an *essential* one because it helps to give life meaning and is *valued for its own sake*.⁷ It is this belief in the irreducibility of the creative impulse which unites the work of Milner and Winnicott. As we shall see in the next section, his theory of the 'potential space', the emphasis on the developmental importance of benign illusion and primary creativeness as fundamental for psychological health (themes which shall be explored below), have much in common with Milner's approach.

In her analysis of her own painting, Milner draws attention to the oral aspect of artistic production. She points out (following Klein) that the phantasies accompanying creativity involve ingestion and incorporation, the phantasied envelopment of what one loves (and may also hate). Milner noticed that many of her free drawings showed this theme of eating or engulfing, and one had a particularly cannibalistic quality [fig. 1 below].

This made her aware of what she calls 'sinister aspects of creation', for as Klein made clear, the unconscious phantasy of taking part of the external world (incorporation) into oneself has sadistic and aggressive components; thus the act of painting and drawing which involves taking part of the external world into oneself, can be perceived as a greedy, cannibalistic destruction of one's loved objects. Milner believed that this could partly explain the 'unreasonable fears that a painting would be "no good" which could so often make it impossible to begin'. However, a more experienced painter will probably feel less anxiety in this act of spiritual envelopment in order to paint, for he knows that he can bring what he has taken inside of himself back to life in the outside world as a work of art (1957, p. 63).

This aspect of creativity relates to what Kleinian aesthetics places at the centre of all art - that it strives to recreate externally what has been internally hurt or destroyed. However, although Milner believes that a large element of creating art relates to this need to preserve and restore one's objects, she feels that painting relates to much more primitive levels of functioning, suggesting that it goes 'deeper in its roots than restoring to immortal life one's lost loves - it goes back to the stage *before one had found a love to lose*' (p. 67, my italics).

When Milner began to consider the *method* of her free drawings and its role in 'realising, or making real, the external world', this very primitive aspect of art became clearer. She came to see the role of visual art as similar to that of the psychoanalyst - 'facilitating the acceptance of both illusion and disillusion, and thus making possible a richer relation to the real world'. This also links to the ideas presented in her two earlier books (1934, 1937) which examined the conditions which fostered a special kind of perception, one that made the world and the self come alive. However, in her drawing experiments she was able to see certain 'inescapable facts' that she had left out in her earlier studies, ones to do with the primitive, basic, that results from the inescapable discrepancy

earlier studies, ones to do with the primitive nating that results from the inescapable discrepancy between the unlimited possibilities of one's dream and the realities of the external world'. Such tension also acts a spur to find a creative solution to the 'human predicament', and Milner contends that artistic and aesthetic experience, in allowing a temporary merge between dream and reality, lessens this primitive hate. Thus art can work to alleviate in both artist and viewer, feelings of resentment, anger and loss of an ideal (phantasied) world.

Milner's creative struggles in *On Not Being Able To Paint* also proved to be very useful in helping her to think about the challenges facing her schizophrenic patient, 'Susan', who produced a great many drawings over her sixteen year's analysis with Milner. A number of these creative efforts Milner interpreted in the light of changes in Susan's sense of body awareness, which was connected with her gradual recognition of the body boundary, as well as the 'gap' between the inner and the external world.

Although Milner saw Susan's drawings as expressions of a reparative activity for all her destructive intentions or actions (cf. Klein and Segal) she did not think of this as their primary function. For not only did Susan's drawings take on a very important meaning in her gradual establishment of a relationship to her own bodily experience, they also helped to establish a connection with Milner herself and the external world. The drawings reveal the effectiveness of artistic activity as a form of communication between patient and analyst, and also highlight the role of the medium (be it paper, paint, words, or even the analyst himself or herself) in the expression of fundamental psychic processes, facilitating the negotiation of the interface between inner and outer reality.

The drawings functioned as 'some sort of substitute mirror that her own mother had never been able to be for her' - in a primitive way they gave her back something of herself, as well as providing a substitute for Milner in the gap between sessions. The act of making and bringing Milner the drawings also served as a kind of bridge towards her acceptance of the 'otherness' of the external world. Through the very fact that they had *real* existence in the outer world and at the same time, in their content and form, came entirely from herself and from *her inner world*, they were a non-discursive affirmation of her own reality. In addition, Milner saw them as affirming the reality of her own experience by slowly building up, restoring, in symbolic form, all kinds of denied aspects of her infantile bodily relation to her mother (1969, p. 240).

Milner had found aspects of Klein's theory helpful in understanding what was going on with Susan. Klein's theory of the paranoid-schizoid position was helpful in thinking about what happened to parts of Susan's psyche, when the object and the self is split into good and bad, and the bad bits of the self are projected into the 'not-me' world, so that the ego is left feeling good, but surrounded by enemies. This helped Milner to understand how her first picture of a face which was all covered over with eyes could result from such a splitting, fragmenting even, of her own inner eye, her capacity for painful self-awareness, and a projecting of the bits outwards into her mother, or into part of her. [Fig. 2 below].

Milner also believed that the 'whole tragedy' of Susan's E.C.T. treatment could be seen as a kind of dramatising of what Klein maintained was the girl child's deepest anxiety, comparable to a boy's castration fear: that is, the inside of her body will be destroyed by a persecuting and aggressive enemy-mother, in revenge for the little girl's wishes to get inside mother and to appropriate what she phantasies to be there (Klein, 1932). Milner points out that after Susan's E.C.T. treatment she no longer felt emotional response to others, her capacity for sadness had been cut-off, and she would cry piteously for Milner to 'give me back my concern'. She felt that after this episode she had become possessed by a devil and had 'gone over to the wrong side'. Milner saw in all this a retreat from the anguished doubt of her power to preserve what she loved both inside and outside, from her own angry, cruel, revengeful feelings - a doubt about which was stronger, her love or her hate.

However, it was Susan's constant use of the circle symbol which drew Milner's attention to new aspects of Susan's problems. What interested Milner was the way in which the circle had the quality of being a gap - one relating to the experience of not-knowing, or even a physical or emotional gap - the feeling of something missing, leaving a blank or an emptiness. With this image in mind, Milner became increasingly interested in trying to understand more about the whole process of fusion, merging, interpenetrating, not only of love and hate but also of subject and object. For she was slowly coming to the conclusion that the acceptance of a phase of some kind of fusion was necessary for all creative work, whether the work is within the psyche or in the outer world. Here we see that Milner was struggling with the growing idea that an illusion of unity that the psychoanalytic theory talked about as a manic state of fusion with the beloved, is not just an attempted escape to the memory of being the satisfied infant at the mother's breast, but exists at one end of a constantly alternating polarity which is the basis of all psychic creativity, and therefore all symbol-formation and psychic growth.

This work with Susan had also been a major stimulus for the 1952 paper on illusion and creativity, which she had been writing during 1950-1951. The first version of this paper was first called

'Aspects of symbolism in the comprehension of not-self' and was re-published as 'The role of illusion in symbol-formation' in *New Directions in Psycho-analysis* (1955).

This important text contained a number of papers in honour of Klein, including Stokes's 'Form in art'. Milner writes that she found much in Stokes's paper that helped to illuminate her own ideas. In the conclusion of the 1952 paper, she had been trying to state that what she called an 'illusion of oneness' was a necessary phase both in all symbol-formation and in the full recognition of two-ness, of differentiation between self and not self. She observed that in 'Form in art', Stokes was saying something very similar when he wrote that

As well as the vivid impress of self contained totalities we renew at the instance of aesthetic sensation the "oceanic feeling", upheld by some of the qualities of id "language", such as interchangeability, from which poetic identifications flow.⁸

Indeed, after reading this, Milner was 'to find all of Stokes's writings very stimulating' (1969, p. 249). For Milner had been trying to verbalise the need to understand more about certain moments in the boy's play which seemed to have a dramatic and aesthetic beauty which the boy also regarded as important to him. She connected this feeling with 'ecstasy' and the need for the illusion of unity which could be a necessary phase in the discovery of separateness.

Milner viewed Susan's constant use of the symbol of the alternation between two circles and one circle as an attempt 'to portray visually a realisation of this same truth (as expressed in her 1952 paper on symbol-formation), a picture of her battle over how to find a fertile interplay between a state of two-ness and of one-ness' [fig. 3 below]. Milner saw the state of one-ness as one characterised by the indeterminacy of boundaries, akin to what Freud referred to as the 'oceanic feeling'. What interested Milner was the question of under what sort of conditions can this state of oneness, of no differentiation, arise.

In her 1952 paper on Simon's play she had begun by tracing his depression to insecure periods during his early childhood, times when it was not safe to be absent-minded because he had to keep a vigilant eye on the external world. Milner had reached the conclusion that 'the state of fusion, of oneness, which can also be seen from the observer's point of view, as a state of absent-mindedness ... does require a condition in the environment which ensures some kind of protection from intrusion, some kind of protective framework' (p. 250).

Not only from watching Simon's play and Susan's use of the symbol of the circle as a framing device, marking off a 'safe space' to play, as it were, but also through her own studies of painting, Milner had become very interested in the role of the *frame* of a picture, that which marks off a different kind of reality from that of everyday life, just as the frame of the room and the fixed period of time mark of an analytic session, and also how dreams are framed in sleep. Milner was also interested in the internal aspects of the frame - in learning how to achieve concentrated states of mind in which one creates one's own inner frame, frame of reference, as essential in all mental productivity, whether creating ideas or art works, a state in which one holds a kind of inner space. It was not until Susan had brought Milner the drawing that she had done after the E.C.T. that she began to see the earliest roots of this relating to the experience of being held in one's mother's arms. [Fig. 4 below]. The impact of the 'post-E.C.T.' drawing had been so intense that Milner writes she 'had been unable at first to concentrate upon its meaning. It produced such a complex state of feeling to do with anguish and tragedy that it seems I did not really know what to do with it' (1969, p. 251). However, Milner recalls with horror her 'cavalier treatment' of Susan's drawing, for instead of making a traced copy, she had 'inked it over'. Milner remembers this action of hers as 'a warning of how too great enthusiasm for the clarity of verbal interpretation can also, at times, disastrously distort what the patient is experiencing'.

When Milner did feel able to think about the picture, it seemed to illustrate the circle theme again, the arms were 'womb-like' enclosing the baby-foetus. Yet despite the anguish, Milner sensed 'a faint glimmer of hope' deep within the picture. The 'hope that she would somehow be able to find a psychic equivalent of the encircling arms, the enclosing 'womb' state' that she must have if she were really to heal the splittings and for the 'defusion' to become 'fusion' again.

The drawing became for Milner a symbol of what she thought that Susan needed from her, and also what of Milner felt she had to achieve within the sessions if the healing process was to begin functioning again - especially in relation to the mind-body split. Milner writes that the picture made her think about her own capacity to achieve in her sessions with Susan, 'a partially undifferentiated and indeterminate state' a 'blankness, an empty circle, emptiness of ideas', rather than feeling the need to constantly fight against the muddle and produce an interpretation (p. 253).

The circle motif also expressed for Milner the theme of self-loss when the ego surrenders to fusion-undifferentiation. However, to the conscious, purposive mind, this is felt like death itself, and concurs with Ehrenzweig's thesis that the de-differentiation of the ego (under the sway of the death instinct) is a pre-requisite for creativity. Thus Milner thinks that

one aspect of the circle, when it was an empty one, could be to do with the urge to indeterminacy, a state which can be felt like being both everything and nothing; and that this must be taken into account as the necessary counterpart of the urge to be something, the urge to differentiate oneself out from the whole.⁹

Milner links together with this idea of a 'good' kind of self-loss' which she had identified in her earlier autobiographical writings. During these 'high moments of feeling', all ideas of the 'goodness' of oneself (in social or moral terms) had disappeared and with this had come the sense of a great release which produced a sense of expansion of consciousness, combined with the feeling that 'the world had been newly created'. Although this could be viewed in Kleinian terms as a 'manic state', Milner felt there was more to it than this. For this experience of self-loss which seemed to lead to the refreshment of her perception of the world was often preceded by a silencing of inner noise, a focusing on the background of one's experience, and is directly linked to the background of one's own body awareness.

Although this giving-up of self-images had seemed at times to be quite easy, it had not always been so. There had been a related phenomenon that her studies in painting had directed her towards. There 'had been moments in making a picture when one seemed to have lost all the original inspiration and nothing good was emerging, a kind of despair that always came, if the picture was to be any good at all, and which included a giving-up of all idea of producing a good painting' (p. 254). Indeed, this need to give up one's conscious strivings relates very much to Bion's (1970) stricture to analysts that they must escape from the bondage of memory and desire - even the wish to *cure* the patient. Bion advocated that the analyst must patiently 'wait for a pattern to emerge' out of the 'deep and formless infinite'; to foster what Keats called the 'Negative Capability': the capacity to tolerate doubts and uncertainties without 'irritably reaching after fact and reason'. This brings to mind Milner's idea that the 'background of awareness' and 'inner silence' (its corporeal base is the 'direct non-symbolic awareness of the body') which is so very important both within analytic session as well as in artistic experience

Milner's main thesis is that the act of creation, like any ecstatic experience, there is also a loosening of the boundary between self and the world - accompanied by a temporary sense of fusion and unity. This is a process which is fostered in both analytic work as well as symbol-formation. In therapeutic change and in artistic creation, Milner believes that not only is there a de-differentiation of subject and object, but also between different levels of mental functioning. This view concurs with Ehrenzweig's (1967) account of the creative rhythm. This sense of fusion is subjectively felt as real, but objectively it is an illusion. But Milner stresses that it is a *vital* illusion - that before there can be a perception of 'two-ness' there has to be an initial sense of one-ness. Without adequate experience of infantile illusion, both the growth of the reality-sense and the capacity for creative work are inhibited. This brings us into the realm of Winnicott's 'potential space', a concept which shall be discussed below in relation to Milner's study of the role of illusion in art and creativity.

2. The dynamics of intrapsychic illusion

The term 'illusion' is used by a number of British School analysts and does not have the same kind of meaning as that attached to the Kleinian notion of 'phantasy'. According to Milner (1952) 'phantasy' is not specific enough and the concept of illusion is needed because this word implies a relation to an 'external object of feeling', even though it may be a phantasied one. The Kleinians' 'phantasy' refers to the unconscious psychic representation of an instinct and is predominantly *internal*. Illusion, rather differently, is pointing to a phenomenon that is close to, even partly is, *both internal and external reality*. The term illusion thus refers to the 'third area' - that which is felt as within the self and also part of the external world. Winnicott (1951) designated this area as the 'transitional' or 'potential' space, regarding it as the place where the child first begins to play, to use symbols, and eventually learns to participate in culture.

The nature and significance of infantile illusion and its role in emotional and intellectual development is one that unites the work of Milner and Winnicott, and distinguishes them from the Kleinians.

Indeed, it is through an exploration of their respective approaches to this theme, that we get to the heart of what distinguishes a Kleinian from a Winnicottian account of aesthetics and creativity.

Both Milner and Winnicott believed that before there can be any meaningful distinction between what is self-created and what is external, the infant must first *create* his own power to perceive the difference between inner and outer reality. In order for this to happen, there has to have been an initial experience of illusion (fostered by the mother's initial full adaptation to her child's needs) when the self and the environment-mother were felt to be 'mixed-up' together. Milner points out how this is true in all subsequent relationships with others - in order to fully realise other people, we have to be able to place ourselves in their position. We must temporarily undo the separateness of self and other, just as the artist must recreate the bodily tension of the model's pose in his imagination. However, the main point of Milner's contribution is that there must be an illusion of fusion where outer reality temporarily mingles with part of the self, so that 'the familiar is found in the unfamiliar' - Wordsworth's account of the poet's task (Milner, 1952).

As we have seen in the earlier section, Milner's writing explores the relationship between the inner and the external world, and she suggests that an initial experience of illusion is required in order to perceive that there *is* a difference between the two realms ('one-ness' as a necessary stage for perception of 'two-ness'). In fact, it was largely through her own painting activities that she became convinced 'that the "other" has to be created before it can be perceived'.¹⁰ Her artistic experience had alerted her to the need for finding a bridge between inner and outer reality, and she stressed that art (as well as play, psychotherapy and religious experience) helps to provide such a link. Milner was to find that this realisation had significance for her clinical work, and we have seen that this was true in her treatment of Susan (and with Simon, as explored below) for whom she came to see the analyst (and also the drawings produced) functioning as a bridge, a 'pliable medium' between inner and outer, and between patient and therapist. It is interesting that towards the end of her therapy Susan produced a vivid symbol of this meeting-point for her self-created reality and the external world - the symbol of a communion cup into which she phantasied spitting.¹¹ The cup thus functioned as both a *receptive* and a *transformative* container for her split-off parts which could be fused and recombined to form something new. [Fig. 5 below].

As we shall see below, Winnicott analysed in great detail the role of this 'bridge' between inner and outer worlds with his concept of the 'transitional object', the child's teddy bear, a rag, a piece of blanket, which is the child's first use of a symbol, and the first 'not-me' possession out of which all cultural and artistic activity arise. Fuller (1987) looks at the work of Natkin and Rothko and believes that the affective elements of their pictorial space suggested that it functioned as a container in which parts of their psyche could integrate (Natkin) or disintegrate (Rothko). More recently, Richard Wollheim (1987) has pointed to the significance of corporeality in art, especially the way in which paintings can metaphorise the body or parts of the body. (This will be explored more fully in chapter seven below.)

It is significant that during Milner's analytic training in the early forties, some of her 'biggest misgivings' about psychoanalytic theory concerned its approach to external reality. Milner felt that neither Freudian nor Kleinian theory fully addressed the interface between the 'inner' and 'outer', and 'found it odd that psychoanalysis talked about [external reality] as if it was something out there, separate from oneself and one's seeing, so that one only had to open one's eyes and there it was'. She describes how refreshing it was, 'like coming from a stuffy room into the fresh air', when she read (in the early 1940's) the following words from the philosopher, G. Santayana:

Perception is no primary phase of consciousness: it is an ulterior function acquired by a dream which has become *symbolic of its own external conditions* and therefore relevant to its own destiny.¹²

This statement had been particularly significant during the writing of *On Not Being Able To Paint*. It seems to be saying in philosophical terms - 'symbolic of its own external conditions' - what Winnicott described when he talked of how the mother's breast comes to be felt by the baby to be what he needs - that is, how the infant comes imaginatively to 'create' the breast. Milner seeing that this recurrent phase of 'feeling at one with what one sees' as part of the rhythm of oneness-twoness, unity-separation, which endows the world with significance and meaning, akin to the capacity which Blake called 'each man's poetic genius'.

Milner found the Freudian account of symbol-formation too narrow and her 1952 paper was spurred by a desire to work out some of these misgivings. She tried looking at Freud's 'two principles of mental functioning' in terms of the 'fusion' and 'defusion' between subject and object; that is in terms of two ways of being which differ according to whether one feels joined up, merged

that is in terms of two ways of being which must according to whether one looks joined up, merged with what one looks at, or separate from it. It had become apparent to her that we seem to know a great deal about this 'separated' state of mind, since our very speech depends upon it, but we know comparatively little about the 'unseparated phase', that of merged boundaries. This is very much defended against, she believes, from out of fear of the loss of identity and even loss of sanity. What followed from this had been the idea that the illusion of no-separateness between either the subject and the object, or between what Winnicott talks about as the 'subjective object' and the 'objective object', could possibly be a necessary phase in all creativity, even in the process of coming to perceive the reality of the external world at all. In fact it had seemed that perception itself is a creative process and it was here that she found Santayana's words very useful for helping her to think about it. (This could also be seen in terms of 'aesthetic' criticism - not only does the aesthetic critic point out to the viewer certain visual attributes, but he also encourages us to think about these images in a different way - by association, metaphor, for example. These new thoughts must, in their turn, also *shape our perception* of the particular artwork. When the critic holds the art work before us, he filters it through his own experience and re-evokes the art work into a new symbolic form which we can think about. Like the good nursing mother, with her 'reverie', the critic can help give meaning to our own perceptions, by holding the dream for us, not by 'explaining it away'.)

Milner's 1955 paper, 'The Role of Illusion in Symbol Formation' marks the beginning of a divergence from Klein's understanding of early infantile experience and its subsequent role in creativity. Grosskurth writes that 'Klein was angry with Milner for having produced a very original idea on the capacity for symbol-making as the basis for creativity'.¹³ Yet despite Klein's disagreement with Milner's stress on the need for states of fusion as part of healthy infancy (Klein regarded this as a 'manic defence') it was included in the volume of papers published in honour of Klein's seventieth birthday, *New Directions in Psychoanalysis* (1955). Although it touched on themes which were also very important to Winnicott, his seminal paper on 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena' (1951) was excluded. In fact, it was this paper which caused the rift between Klein and Winnicott. According to Grosskurth, at an editorial meeting to discuss which papers should be included in the collection, Winnicott had refused to alter the paper to fit in with Klein's ideas, and 'with the manuscript tucked under his arm, he sadly left the room. As he later told his wife, "Apparently Mrs Klein no longer considers me a Kleinian"'.¹⁴

In her 1952 paper, Milner introduces themes which interweave throughout her work: the imagery connected with dying and rebirth involved in the creative process; the link between aesthetic value and creativity, together with the way that the body and instinctual processes are implicated in these experiences. (The theme of body experience, relaxation and its relationship to creative living was also prominent in Winnicott's thinking.) Milner describes how Simon, an eleven year-old boy, had a lack of interest in hobbies and schoolwork which made him withdrawn and depressed. It is important to note that the case was, during the first part, supervised by Klein, and 'Simon' was in fact Klein's own grandson, Michael Clyne.

The case material centres around 'a game of war between two villages'. The child set up two rival villages and commanded Milner to 'see his people as gods'. With a dramatic, ritual quality, he would then close the curtains, light some candles, and throw matches over the 'villages'. Milner was very struck by the *aesthetic* dimension to these activities. She writes that

... there was a quality in his play which I can only describe as beautiful - occasions on which it was he who did the stage-managing and it was my imagination which caught fire. It was in fact a play with light and fire. He would close the shutters of the room and insist that it be lit only by candle light ... And then he would make what he called furnaces, with a very careful choice of what ingredients should make the fire, including dried leaves from special plants in my garden [which] had to be put in a metal cup on the electric fire ... And often there had to be a sacrifice, a lead soldier had to be added to the fire, and this figure was spoken of either as the victim or the sacrifice. In fact this type of play had a dramatic ritual quality comparable to the fertility rites described by Frazer in primitive societies.¹⁵

This play recalls the 'poemagic' imagery connected with violent death and sacrifice that Ehrenzweig believed both induced and symbolised the creative process itself, and which Milner noticed in her earlier studies of visual imagery in *An Experiment in Leisure*. Simon's play expressed for Milner 'the idea of integration' and the desire for a 'passionate union with an external object'. His game seemed to be telling her that the basic identifications which make it possible to find the 'familiar in the unfamiliar' require an 'ability to tolerate a temporary loss of self' - a giving up of the rational ego for a while. (That Ehrenzweig termed the liberating experience. Indeed, Milner links it with what

for a while (what Ehrenzweig termed the 'creative surrender'). Indeed, Milner links it with what Berenson describes as the 'aesthetic moment':

... that fleeting instant, so brief as to be almost timeless, when the spectator is at one with the work of art he is looking at, or with actuality of any kind that the spectator himself sees in terms of art, as form and colour. He ceases to be his ordinary self, and the picture or building, statue, landscape, or aesthetic actuality is no longer outside himself. The two become one entity; time and space are abolished and the spectator is possessed by one awareness. When he recovers workaday consciousness it is as if he had been initiated into illuminating, formative mysteries.¹⁶

Stokes referred to this sense of feeling of fusion with the object as the 'invitation in art', the pull exerted by the artwork - its tendency to draw us in so that we feel a sense of merging, becoming 'lost' in the artwork. However, Stokes felt that this pole of the experience must be balanced by the depressive sense of 'object otherness' if it is to be a truly full and mature aesthetic experience.

Milner saw Simon's struggles in terms of what poets and artists are also concerned with expressing. It is not that such 'aesthetic moments' are confined to encounters with *specific* objects, however, but that art is a way, in adult life, for *reproducing states that are part and parcel of healthy infancy*. As is well known to those familiar with Wordsworth, he, like many of the Romantic poets, related such heightened states of awareness to infancy and childhood. In his 'Immortality Ode', for example, he mourns the loss of childhood perception, that 'visionary gleam' and 'master light of all our seeing' which must inevitably fade as 'Shades of the prison house begin to close/ Upon the growing boy'.

The receptive role of the toys which were the equivalent of an artist's medium, alerted Milner to the process she had herself tried to observe introspectively when she was doing her 'free drawings' in *On Not Being Able To Paint*. She (like Winnicott) believed that there was something important common to psychotherapy, artistic effort and playing, which distinguished them from day-dreaming. In play and aesthetic experience there is something of a half-way house between day-dreaming (the stuff of inner phantasy) and purposeful muscular activity - the reaching out and shaping the world according to one's inner phantasy. This was vividly illustrated when Milner noticed that as soon as Simon *moved* one of the toys, the play village was suddenly different and a whole new set of possibilities emerged - just as in imaginative free drawing, the sight of a mark on paper provokes new associations, the line seems to answer back (reciprocate) and functions as a very primitive external object. In a similar spirit, in his analytical sessions with children, Winnicott developed the 'squiggle game'. Winnicott would start by drawing at random a squiggly line on a blank piece of paper, and the child would respond to this by joining it with a line of his own. Thus, a dialogue would emerge which enabled an interchange between the reality of the patient and therapist in the spirit of playful communication. Interestingly, this sense of a (psychic and bodily) reciprocity between the artist and his medium concurs with what Wollheim calls 'thematisation' - an essentially *embodied* process by which the artist, after making an initial mark, starts to take account of its relationship to the surrounding space, the edge of the paper or canvas, and other material properties of the surface.¹⁷

A few weeks after the war-of-the-villages game, something significant happened which gave Milner another clue as the role of the toys. Simon's 'bullying tone' had vanished when he was told that his form master had given him permission to work on his favourite hobby (photography) at school. The sudden disappearance of the bullying attitude led Milner to believe that it was his 'spontaneously creative activity' (his play) being incorporated into the framework of the school which was fulfilling in 'real life' the solution foreshadowed in the village war game. What he had felt to be the soulless, routine world of the school, now appeared humanised - he could now take in a bit of himself that he had created for the outside world (the school). But what was important was that it was only *now* he could 'take in' what the school had to offer - for they had previously made a number of gestures which had largely been rejected. Milner thinks that these efforts had not been taken up by Simon because they had 'not taken the particular form of the incorporation of acceptance of a bit of his own spontaneous creation' (1987, p. 93). Because of the school had now become receptive to his own personality (his love of photography) it demonstrated that although a predominantly 'male' environment, it was capable of good mothering. Indeed, this need was foreshadowed in his dreams when his mother had been present in his Latin class - the most problematic of his subjects. Milner interpreted that on an important level, the village play had to do with the 'not-me-ness' of his school life.

Milner also felt that, like the toys, she became his medium - a part of the external world that he

Milner also felt that, like the toys, *she became his medium* - a part of the external world that he would accept his phantasy, yet still be an *independent* object. (This concurs with Winnicott's account of the transitional object which 'is neither internal nor external but partakes of both'.) Milner felt that Simon's use her 'might not only be a defensive regression but an *essential recurrent phase of a creative relation to the world*' (p 104, my italic). Milner believes that such moments are infused with an *aesthetic* sense; they are moments when 'the original poet in each of us created the outside world for us, by finding the familiar in the unfamiliar' (p. 88). These ideas were of great interest to Winnicott, who developed their implications in his account of play.¹⁸

Milner also emphasised the need for *boundaries* to be taken into account, in both the realm of art and psychoanalysis, and this led her to recognise the role of the *frame* in art, psychoanalysis, and many other aspects of living. The frame indicates that what is inside the frame needs to be interpreted differently from that outside the frame. This marks off a different kind of reality and it is the psychoanalytic frame which creates full development of that 'creative illusion' of the transference. It is by means of this illusion that a better adaptation to the world is established.

The conditions under which this illusion within the frame can be perceived is that of 'reverie' - a state of receptivity and tolerance, where it is safe to fall apart, the creation of a where there is no need to worry about the practical business of living. Bion also saw the mother's capacity for reverie (her 'containing' function) as essential for the infant's capacity for tolerating external reality and instinctual frustration. Winnicott was pointing to similar idea in his concept of 'primary maternal preoccupation' which he regards a temporary kind of 'madness where the mother withdraws from the external world and becomes highly attuned to the needs of her infant. Without this capacity, she will be unable to give the infant the 'holding' he needs in order to preserve his 'vital illusion of oneness'.

Milner looked very closely at the relationship between play and its role in establishing and defining, the 'boundary' between self and other. For her own introspective study of the problems involved in painting had alerted her to the fact that 'the variations in the feeling of the existence or non-existence of the body-boundary are themselves important'. Both Winnicott and Milner felt uncomfortable that the Kleinian account of the paranoid-schizoid splitting of objects into good and bad 'part objects' *took for granted* the existence of a clear boundary between the self and the object from the start, and therefore did not reach the heart of what Simon's playing (and indeed all symbolic activity) was all about - for there was much in his play that involved burning and melting, suggesting the *obliteration* of boundaries.

For Milner and Winnicott, the sense of a boundary between inner and outer reality is acquired gradually and is dependent on environmental factors. Milner contends that by 'using art either as artist or audience, or by using psychoanalysis', we can keep our perception and aesthetic capacities fresh - for it is these worlds (the aesthetic and the psychoanalytic) which link subjective and objective, but without *confusing* them.

With the presence of illusion in art, Milner makes it clear that the provision of a *frame* for the created work is often necessary to protect the sanity of the experience of the work. With a painting an actual frame informs the viewer that the area within it portrays an illusion: the work of art is not actual external reality but a portrayal of it even if there is no actual frame there is a recognisable edge somewhere. A similar frame is created in the analytic drama, provided by the setting established by the analyst from the start: the analytic session, the fee, as well as the decor and arrangement of the room, the analyst's way of speaking and so on. It is this frame which helps one distinguish between illusion and delusion.

Milner argues that Kleinian concepts (such as splitting, projective identification and introjection) are not adequate to account for all the meanings of such experiences, for which the notion of a healthy return to a state of oceanic oneness is required. Milner suggests that Simon was expressing with his metal fire cup the 'inner fire of concentration' and, especially with the melted-down soldier, the *dissolution* of his ordinary common-sense ego (cf. Ehrenzweig's de-differentiation of ego-consciousness during the 'unconscious scanning' process in creativity). This also implies that in the counter-transference experience of herself catching fire, Milner was herself experiencing the dissolution of boundaries, or absence of them, in the infant-mother 'reverie' with her patient'. Thus with both Milner and Winnicott, we can talk of 'benign illusion' as a necessary stage or place not only in the establishment of both self and other but also as an essential to the repeated renewals and enrichments of self (particularly through 'aesthetic moments') throughout life.

Although Milner acknowledges the usefulness of Klein's theory of symbol-formation, citing Klein's (1930) belief that 'symbolism is the basis of all talents', her 1952 paper makes new suggestions concerning the importance of *fusion between subject and object*, especially highlighting its *developmental* role. Milner was especially interested in the establishment of the *boundary* between self and other in infancy, for until this boundary between self and other was established, the mechanisms of projection and introjection could not begin. For if these mechanisms are to be active,

there must be an implicit sense of an ego-boundary.

There was much reciprocity between Milner and Winnicott's ideas regarding the nature of illusion and the image of overlapping circles which was so important for Milner, provides a good motif for the relationship between Milner and Winnicott's thinking! It is significant that Milner was writing her paper on illusion at the time Winnicott was publishing his paper on transitional phenomena in 1951. Both pieces of work explore the same territory that Kleinian and Freudian theory had largely ignored - the positive aspects of the 'main-oceanic' feeling and its role in establishing the reality-sense.

In his 1951 paper on 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena', Winnicott sets out to examine what he later described as 'the separation that is not a separation but a form of union'.¹⁹ He writes that during the forties (an important point in the phase of development of his ideas concerning boundary and space) Milner was able to convey to him through a visual image 'the tremendous significance that there can be in the interplay of the edges of two curtains, or of the surface of a jug that is placed in front of another jug'. This image refers to Milner's picture of 'Two Jugs' which appeared in *On Not Being Able To Paint* [fig. 6 below]. She too, saw it as a powerful way of expressing in visual terms the nature of the interchange between objects, and how their separate identities are by no means fixed and straightforward.

Although both analysts were pupils of Klein and active members of the Kleinian circle during the forties, they did not accept her ideas uncritically. Both Milner and Winnicott disagreed with a number of central Kleinian views, for example: the belief that object relations operate from birth; the literal acceptance of death instinct; the concept of the paranoid-schizoid position, and Klein's view that envy is inborn. Although Winnicott praised Klein for her account of the infantile depressive position, he referred to the time when the infant becomes aware of the mother as whole and separate as 'the stage of concern', a term with less melancholic and pathological associations. For both Winnicott and Milner, play is regarded as a largely benign and joyful affair, not fraught with the sadistic phantasies and conflicts emphasised by Klein. Their differences came to a head in 1951, in the debate between Klein and Winnicott over his concept of the 'transitional object', which Klein found absolutely unacceptable.²⁰

The notion of a transitional object which is neither an internal nor an external concept, but one that transcends both inner and outer reality and occupies a 'potential' or 'transitional' space, is very significant in the development of British School thinking. Not only does it introduce a new concept of whole new realm of experience into psychoanalysis, it also marks a new way of understanding symbol-formation, creativity and the aesthetic experience. Indeed, it is the notion of the 'transitional object' and 'transitional' or 'potential' space which distinguishes a 'Kleinian' from a 'Winnicottian' account of aesthetics. Winnicott's ideas have been of great interest to a number of writers in the academic domain. For example, the philosopher, R. Kuhns (1983) has developed an account of

culture based on insights from Winnicott's theory of child development, and, as we shall see below, the art critic Peter Fuller has deployed Winnicott's ideas in his analysis of American 'Colour Field' painting.

Winnicott took a very different line from the Kleinian view of art as reparation. Indeed, he complained that psychoanalytic aesthetics had directed too much focus on the art product and its content rather than on the creative impulse itself, and in *Playing and Reality* he explicitly separates the idea of creation from actual works of art. According to his theory, everything that happens to a person is creative except insofar as the individual is not ill or hampered by ongoing environmental factors which stifle the creative processes.

Winnicott believed that the *creative impulse* itself is the primary concern of all applications of psychoanalysis to the understanding of art. Primary creativity is the essential precondition for all meaningful experience. Analytic writers who focus on specific artworks and/or questions of why a particular individual was a great artist miss the main point - the creative impulse itself. The actual art object is a secondary concern for Winnicott - it obscures rather than illuminates, and 'stands between the observer and the artist's creativity'.²¹

Winnicott is probably the first psychoanalyst to distinguish explicitly between creative activity and the actual production of art works. Although he says that a creation can be a picture, a poem, a house, for example, he believes that it is better to say that these things *could* be creations: 'the creativity that concerns him is a universal and belongs to being alive'. The creative impulse is a thing-in-itself involved in both artistic production and everyday creative living. Thus there is no *qualitative* distinction between certain kinds of art works, nor indeed, what makes an object an art work per se, as distinct from an ordinary object. Winnicott's theory sees no real difference between the creativity involved in humming a tune, baking a cake, creating a symphony or everyday pleasure in one's bodily sensations, such as breathing for instance.

Although Winnicott praises Klein for her understanding of aggressive impulses in development, the

importance of their fusion with the life impulse, and the role of guilt feeling in artistic experience, he believed that Klein's linking of *creativity with reparation did not reach the subject of creativity itself*. Both Freud and Klein, he argued, 'took refuge in heredity' and thus avoided the implications of infantile dependence and the role of the environment. His concept of the *transitional object* and the *potential space* fulfil a crucial role here. Unlike Klein, Winnicott did not believe that the mechanism of unconscious phantasy was operative at the start of life. Thus the concept of the transitional object is the means by which the child learns to overcome the dramatic realisation that he is not omnipotent.²²

The child's first teddy bear or blanket are Winnicott's examples of such an object which is neither under inner control, nor does it obey the demands of external reality. The teddy bear represents the infant's transition from a state of being merged with the mother to a state of being in relation to the mother as something outside and separate. However, Winnicott stressed that it is not the object itself but the use to which it is put which determines its 'transitional' status.

Winnicott also defines a paradoxical, almost mystical third area of experiencing that is neither phantasy nor reality, but exists between both. It is an envelope-like space mediating between subjective and objective worlds. This space opens out when the child begins to recognise the gap between his needs and their fulfilment (at first, by the mother). It is within this space that a sense of a 'me' and a 'not-me' can be acquired gradually. Although Winnicott first introduced a theory about the

nature of this 'space' between reality and phantasy, it is interesting that we find it prefigured in the work of Rank, who, like Winnicott and Milner, discerns a continuity between the realm of play and the world of art. Like play, 'the intermediate character of the work of art ... links the world of subjective reality with that of objective reality - harmoniously fusing the edges of each without confusing them'.²³ This idea lies at the heart of Winnicott's theory, although he makes no reference to Rank's work.

The whole concept of culture and art are intimately linked with this concept and Winnicott stresses that:

The transitional object does not 'go inside' nor does the feeling about it necessarily undergo repression. It is not forgotten and it is not mourned. It loses its meaning, and this is because the transitional phenomena have spread out over the whole intermediate territory between 'inner psychic reality' and the 'external world as perceived by two persons in common', that is to say, over the whole cultural field.²⁴

The transitional object is the foundation of Winnicott's account of cultural and aesthetic experience. He stresses that it represents the child's first use of a symbol, the entry into culture, upon which all subsequent cultural activity is based. Privately Winnicott would say that a human infant couldn't even develop fully, or at least not into an artist, unless he had actually experienced the transitional use of an object.

The child's creativity is directly influenced by the mother's 'good-enough' care. However, this is something most Kleinians would hesitate to allow because of the unnecessary burden it places on the *real* mother's maternal capacity. Winnicott believed that it is the environment which plays the decisive role in creative development - the mother must allow her child illusion and facilitate its gradual abandonment. The return to illusion is enabled via the transitional object at a later stage. But in order for the child to endow a teddy, or any other object in the external world, with his own private meaning, he must have had the initial experience of illusion, when his mother was fully adapted to meet his needs.

The central feature of this approach to art and creativity is the focus on the creative *process* rather than on the art *product*. It is the relationship between playing and the formation of transitional objects which eventually leads to a shared art and culture, though no independent account of *aesthetic value* is provided. The emphasis is on the creativity of everyday living, rather than on specific artistic achievement and its value.

In section one of the next Chapter, we will explore how Winnicott and Milner's ideas have been effectively deployed in the art criticism and aesthetics of Peter Fuller.

NOTES

1. See especially Bollas (1979, 1983, 1989), Coltart (1986), Meltzer (1988), Likiernan (1989),

Parsons (1990).

2. Milner (1937), p. 151.

3. 'The Creative Surrender' (1957).

4. Milner (1969), p. 410n.

5. 'This paper was read in 1960 at a Congress on Aesthetics in Athens. It is reprinted in Milner (1987), pp. 235 -238.

6. M. Podro (1990), p. 401-2. In her response to Podro's paper, Milner reveals that her family had been acquainted with Coldstream and in fact his first portrait (of Mrs Burgher) was of her sister. Milner recalls that at the time it was painted in the thirties, it had taken seventy sittings, which she feels accounts for the fact that it is not a very good likeness! (The portrait is now in the Tate Gallery, given by Adrian Stokes, and is also reproduced on the paperback edition of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.)

7. Here, most Kleinians would argue that illusion, far from being benign and necessary stage in the development of a reality-sense, is in fact a regression to a paranoid-schizoid position, characterised by part-object relationships, and a sense of omnipotence and manic fusion.

8. A. Stokes (1955), in *Collected Papers*, p. 110.

9. (1969), p. 253).

10. Milner (1969), p. 404.

11. Ibid., pp. 370-2.

12. Milner (1987), p. 119, my italic. The quotation is from G. Santayana's 'The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men', in his *Little Essays* (1920). Milner borrows the title of this essay for the title of her most recent contribution, (Milner, 1988). The 'suppressed madness' that concerns Santayana relates to certain people or states of mind that are cut off from what he calls the 'instincts', and Milner takes this to mean, 'cut off from the body'. She notes that Winnicott describes similar kinds of states when he refers to a 'lack of indwelling' and also to a 'lack of psychosomatic collusion', both of which describe an aspect of madness when the psyche and soma (head and the heart) are not working together.

13. Ibid., p. 396.

14. Grosskurth (1985), p. 398.

15. Op. cit., p. 96.

16. B. Berenson, *Aesthetics and History* (1920).

17. Wollheim (1987), pp. 19-25.

18. Winnicott (1971), pp. 44-62.

19. 'The Location of Cultural Experience' (1967), *ibid.*, p. 115.

20. For an account of the Klein-Winnicott debate, see relevant sections in Grosskurth (1985), Phillips (1988), and Rayner (1990).

21. *Playing and Reality* (Pelican, 1988), p. 81.

22. The transitional object fulfils a crucial role here for, unlike Klein, Winnicott has no recourse to the mechanism of unconscious phantasy operating at the start of life. The former is the means by which the child learns to overcome the dramatic realisation that he is not omnipotent. Where Klein's theory focuses on the drama of the inner world,; the trajectory of psychological and emotional development from fragmentation to integration, Winnicott looks closely at the child's interactions with the external world, via the transitional object.

23. O. Rank (1932), p. 104.

24. *Collected Papers* (1958), p. 255.

