

## OUTTAKES - SELECTIONS FROM JOURNAL 1976-2025<sup>1</sup>

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Language games are vital in order to structure one's experience and to free thought from the dominance of sensations. But there is a price to be paid - alienation from nature, and suffering.

The problem of the unsayable, the negative object, the unsayable impossible object.

The problem of illumination, uncreated light (Duns Scotus)

The mother's point of light.

Curiosity and the appetite of the eye.

Augustine - the individual on the mountain who sees the pure light above and the mist below.

The fading of the subject - may have something to do with waking up and forgetting the dream or going to sleep. Or to something about the whole structure of what we call the subject, an unstable structure that constantly fades, whose light goes out, that dies. Or to the fact that when you have reached some point you can understand, what you think is truth, then clearly it is not the whole story. You erase and recreate, and so it goes on.

Certain artists like Giotto, Cézanne, Rembrandt, draw us into their pictures, so that we almost touch the objects depicted, or they almost look at us. But when we try to discuss what happens, something is lost or missing. As there is always something unknowable about us, which they touch.

Thoughts about Cézanne. He had quite a lot to say about the artistic process, often emphasizing the need for the artist to restrain ordinary perception and control and allow another more receptive process to take place. This other process is presumably somewhere in touch with the unconscious. I say somewhere because I'm not sure quite where the boundary between consciousness and unconscious would be. It is very ambiguous. The strange nature of oil paint is a medium itself, as Francis Bacon has emphasized, makes it uncertain how is conscious and how much unconscious while the artist is at work. And after all, the work itself, the application of paint on the canvas or paper, has its own momentum. So, one brushstroke leads to another one, work brings up new horizons and new problems. Maybe with Cézanne the issue for him was that he had a powerful vision of what he was aiming towards, but a terrible struggle with the actual brushstrokes. Perhaps the work is so emotionally engaging because of this very struggle. One may make a comparison with Beethoven's creative struggles. As well as the process of letting be, Cézanne also describes a synthesizing role of the artist's 'temperament', which brings together the various fragments of sensations and enables the artist to realize his

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vision or his 'motif'. Certainly, Cézanne believed that the artist had to paint with feeling, otherwise the work would be dead, an academic exercise. Cézanne was so revolutionary as he presents us with a new vision of the world, overturning traditional means of representation. Instead of the old Cartesian model, a view of the human subject looking out at a world with a mini little world inside him which reflected the outside world, he shows a different way of seeing. Which of course, became the basis for much of modern art. Cézanne presents us with the issue of subjectivity itself, or temperament as he called it. He represented the encounter between him and the object. There had been precedents in the romantic movement, and Cézanne was impressed by Delacroix. But he was also more classical and engaged with more than just an emotional response, but with formal relationships.

Why does the hallucinating subject obey a voice? For example, if the voice says you must go and kill yourself. The voice is not simply a perception, an object perceived outside like ordinary voices with which one can have a rational conversation, or which one can reject or agree with. A hallucinated voice is a *percipiens*. It is of the subject and when it says go and kill yourself, it is really the subject saying go and kill yourself. And thus, he obeys himself, only he rejects the notion consciously.

What does psychosis mean for the psychiatric patient? An illness. A particular reaction. A message indicated something is not well in the family or themselves. Feeling of precarious subjectivity.

Tustin - the heartbreak at the centre of human existence - separation, the realization of body separateness and the relation of the individual to others question. The autistic object not differentiated from body stuff. The capsulation in autism; the modification of relations with the other; less reading of cues, more rigidity, less give and take and flow, brittleness.

Tustin describes how the therapist, by a process of imaginative reconstruction of primitive experience, lends the patient his thinking and provides an auxiliary interpretative agency until he can provide his own. I would add that, especially with such children, the therapist's mind helps to introduce a principle of order and regularity, that an important part of the therapeutic alliance is his experience of the therapist as a person interested in giving meaning, in trying to cut out shapes with his help out of his confused, indistinct mass of sensations and signs - with, however, great respect for the patient's mind. Indeed, perhaps one can say that a main use of language is to free thought from the dominance of sensations. And that as well as finding a language for sensations, one is replacing crude sensations by language; or else transforming the crude sensations, by means language, into more manageable feelings.

Groups – forces keeping them together and forces keeping them apart.

The writer, especially the poet, has the realm of the undefined, the unsaid, constantly before them. It retreats as they approach a word, when they touch language's source.

The neurotic lives in the law, suffers and wants to be well within the law. The schizophrenic suffers from something else. Compare the latter with Kafka's *Trial* where the law is outside, never stated. K is possessed by it. But there is no effective law only the symbol of the law. He meets the symbolic law, for example, in the court. Law in Kafka is ever present but indefinite, like a paranoid delusion.

Functions of language – small talk, socializing, and various other functions. In schizophrenia

- hiding type language, joke language, schizophrenic small talk, poetic language, word salad.

Compare psychosis to a dream backwards. On waking from a dream, you feel that there were connections between events, but that all seemed absurd. In psychosis, there is a similar situation but in reverse. Everything suddenly acquires connections which were unthought or undreamt of. In that sense, it is akin to a creative act.

Different kinds of spontaneity. Spontaneity of the unconscious captured in jokes irruption into the into consciousness. The unexpected. The realm of surprise. Spontaneity of response in thought and feeling. The latter possible for the analyst in occasionally. Spontaneity in personal encounters. Freedom and spontaneity. Freedom to relate. Political spontaneity – uprising, Trotsky, Havel.

Split transference. Certain patients, e.g. after a psychotic breakdown, as the father transference is approached then quickly fear about being taken over by the mother, or vice versa. Or a flight from the transference. Linked to early failure to integrate the two primary objects.

The analyst's interest in the past is really for the purpose of explaining the present. Which is much less true of most historians. Psychoanalysts interpret the developing process, aiming at psychic experience rather actual events. Although it may be important to have some sense of the reality of an experience. The day-to-day work of the analyst a bit like the meticulous work of the historian in the archive. The two-fold function of history- the historian/psychoanalyst helps sort out the patient's material but also helps to break up unities and deconstructs and decentres the listening experience, creating new meaning. The past is transformed into a history.

Freud in *Civilization* and its Discontents. The image of archaeological memory, with all the sights intact. The psychical object is preserved in a strange sort of archaeological field made up of fixed and shifting elements. Engulfment of Pompeii and burial of Tutankhamun compared to repression as cataclysm and burial in the unconscious.

The signs that are waiting for someone who can respond to the elusiveness of the patient's subjectivity and try to help them speak authentically. Restoring to life. Compare to a musical score bringing the music to life.

Psychotic depression. The other is not there when missed. There is nothing there to be missed. The depression covers and covers over, comes in place of what is missing.

Hegel - nature goes in cycles, history goes in spirals; it never repeats itself. Apparent repetitions are always differentiated by acquiring something new. Compare to psychoanalytic repetition.

Historical imagination (Collingwood). History is a combination of a perception of the here and now and of abstract thought that apprehends the everywhere and always, the transient and the reasoned knowledge of abstract entities. The historian is constantly selecting, constructing and criticizing. Imagination is the activity which bridges the gaps between what authorities tell us and gives the historical narrative or description its continuity. The historian's picture of his subject appears as a web of imaginative construction stretched between certain fixed points provided by the statements of their authorities. Compare with the authority of the patient. The web of imaginative construction as the touchstone to establish alleged facts as genuine or not.

Use in the analytic setting. The past can only be understood from a perspective. The past is not dead but living on in the present. The past as reenactable between people, the psychoanalytic principle - Collingwood modified.

The past in psychoanalysis may come up as what has not been understood or felt or transformed. Obviously, trauma being the obvious example. So, there is the past that is available for memory. Then there is the past that may be just enacted. For example, a patient not turning up for some sessions regularly. That could be bringing something from the past that has not been metabolized. The absences may be evidence of something that needs to be understood, not just acting out.

How are we able to know the mind of another? This raises many fundamental questions about the nature of our minds and about what psychoanalysts are up to when they treat people. In a sense, a psychoanalyst takes it for granted that the other person is knowable to some extent at least. There would not be much point in seeing someone for analysis if one thought that the other was a complete puzzle. It may take a long time in analysis to begin to make sense of what the other person is about. It can take time to become familiar with the other's way of being, to appreciate their own subjective view of the world; though there are times when issues are reasonably clear from the beginning, at least in a general way. On the other hand, there is much we do not know about the other person, and perhaps can never know; as well as areas that are untouched, or are only barely known

What Husserl called the paradox of human subjectivity - the fact that the human being is both a subject for the world and at the same time an object in the world. There seem to be many ways of what we mean by an objective as opposed to a subjective understanding of humans. There seem to be at least three ways of seeing this problem. First, to attempt to eliminate the distinction as Husserl and Dewey attempted. Second, to focus more on the subjective understanding as, for example, Kierkegaard and Sartre, proposed. And thirdly to attempt to find a place for both the subjective and the objective realms as Thomas Nagel has suggested.

Faith is the realm of personal meaning, ethics the realm of commitment.

Spectrum of being in the world/alienation from one's own being.

The game as the prototypical subjective organisation.

The many voices of consciousness. Yet the many voices still have the quality of consciousness, fleeting here and gone. Consciousness not a single defile. Consciousness is a multiple type of structure adapted to man social being. Taking account of multiple realities, many voices, many subjects. Compare to a fugue made up of independent voices which yet makes a new reality. In psychoanalysis, we hear voices emerging out of the unconscious.

Losing oneself in a novel is pleasurable not for the escape as such, but because entering the story is to enter into a deep relation to our subjectivity.

Home as a place to just sleep. Or as a place to live.

Therapy- helping to find a sense of belonging and location, dwelling in the world rather than retreating from it.

We must go beyond the subject/object relationship. But we cannot really do that yet. We still have the old tools that have to be used. But something else is constantly pushing to break away. Which is clear in Freud. Merleau-Ponty sites the visible as the common stuff. Heidegger talks about being.

Merging and petrification as two ways of stultifying otherness and closing off the subjective world.

Of course there are self-experiences from within. But it is in answering the other, in encounters and the meeting of two consciousness that produces the whole human response. The social response.

Undoing the negative, a constant task of psychoanalytic treatment.

Rites of passage. Symbolic acts which unite the individual with a group or ways of bringing the individual into relation with the group. Having a place, becoming a subject. Marking the passage into full subjectivity.

My notion of subjective organization is really more a way of thinking. Starting to define an area of study, an area of experience. So, I can begin to map out field, to start making new contributions. It means revising old theories, but of course there are doubts and certainties and inherent difficulties in the model. This doesn't mean stop seeing how the model may help, even if in the end we must discard it.

Creating a place to survive is one of the earliest basics of the subject's structure.

Looking at the legal system in different ways. First, an ideal model, the concept, the notion of a ground rule, etc. Next, the reality in the day-to-day of what happens. Thirdly, historical elements, some of which are repressed. And lastly, the unconscious deep structures embedded in the legal system, about which people may or may not be consciously aware, e.g. some assumptions about human behaviour, how groups are formed.

Creating a lived experience in psychoanalysis not just imparting understanding.

Problem of subjectivity. It is inevitable that we come up against some basic philosophical and sociological problems in psychoanalysis. For example, is the subject is given or constructed? Socially constructed or what? If the subject is socially constructed, we need to examine this process. If society is built up by activity that expresses subjective meaning, what we mean by subjectivity here. Can we use psychoanalytic experience to flesh out the question and reframe our notions of subjectivity? We need to look at the notion of social structure and its place and function in the structure of the subject. As the subject is a notion that embraces the individual and social fields. It has a dual structure. An example of how individuals can bolster up the social world. Havel's Power of the Powerless. When everyone stops believing in a system and it no longer functions. So there needs to be a fundamental sceptical attitude to the system. The system needs to be open to debate and change or else subjects are frozen.

Face to face sessions can be interactive but also can encourage evasions. The couch with

its elimination of the face-to-face encounter, an *epoché* of sorts, reveals subjectivity in all its power and fleetingness.

Nietzsche – the invention of the subject.

The horror of loneliness given the constitutional sociability of mankind.

Differentiate the analyst reacting to the patient as in one form of countertransference from the analyst's subjective response as part of intersubjective communication.

Disruptions to subjectivity as in abuse cases.

Enid Balint and unconscious communication – e.g. the patient having to experience the subjective reality of, say the grandparent, communicated via the parent. That is, a piece of split-off, dissociated element of subjective experience. A piece of the mother's subjectivity which has remained unconscious and not allowed to be experienced as subjective, cut off from its moorings and context. Experience 'by proxy'.

Practice, being embedded in human life, often runs ahead of theory.

Irony in psychoanalysis. Socrates both disavows he has knowledge yet clearly does have wisdom. Cf. the analyst who both disclaims knowing the 'truth' yet also answers through interpretations etc., with a skill in reading the unconscious.

Analyst's presence and absence. Being with, being there, being behind, and letting-be.

The oedipal constellation is in the end about taking up a position, one way or another with respect to desire. E.g. the male or female position etc. At the cost of the other position. However, clinical experience reveals how difficult taking up a position can be for some people, how people may hover between positions, or be confused and cannot assume their desire. In the classical Oedipus complex there is the fantasy of the rival's death or elimination, such as the killing of the father; one element must be pushed aside in order to take up one's own position. The 'third position' stabilizes shifting identifications. The hysterical identification in Freud as a special kind of unstable identification.

Recounting past events in the session creates history.

Different kinds of 'between'. Between solid parents etc. Between many people with the attachment, for example, floating in space looking for a gravitational pull.

History as multiple representations of the past. In the transference, the historical element includes the past and the present and reworking of the past.

With the patient - the rhythm of the history of the events. But also, another kind of historical rhythm, the unconscious and timelessness.

Differentiate the analyst as witness and as reconstructive historian.

One danger of historical retrospective reconstruction is the sense of fatality that the past

is set and there is no contingency. So, one needs to allow for surprise and uncertainty, limiting fatalism. The same goes with psychoanalytic explanations.

The debris of psychotic breakdown.

Oakeshott - Differentiates practical past from the historical past. And in psychoanalysis we deal with both. Or in parallel. We hear the practical past, but we cover in the process of analysis the historical past. Or we convert the practical to historical past. Psychoanalytical history as the story of the subject's traces, fossil footprints. The past is carried in various ways by the subject, in relationship, recollection, in the stream of lived experience. Transference *from* the past, repeating the past in therapy or in relationships. Transference *to* the past, distorting one's view of the past from the present.

Shakespeare's dramatic spaces – green spaces, islands, new arrivals, sometimes tolerant spaces, dream-space, wild heath where Lear is turned out of his homes, places outside the court, often confusion, or storm, and then resolution of conflicts, rebalancing of distorted loves. Identities are alter-ed. Although there is often no simple resolution. C.f. having a therapeutic space outside the home in order to reconcile opposites and tolerate differences and re-find a sense of home.

Shakespeare challenges comfortable notions of identity and difference, strangeness and familiarity, challenges the 'thinking as usual' approach of comfortable home life, the boundary between the known and the unknown, what is beneath surface appearances. Pervading many of the dramas - the question of where one's true home is.

Intolerance as destroying society's social relations. Makes it impossible for different communities to communicate, home is no longer a safe place. No harm principle and respect principle needed together to counter intolerance.

Tolerance a stage before acceptance. Negative tolerance, putting up with, positive tolerance as a virtue. Building bridges not walls. 'Live and let live,' i.e. accept different ways of life.

Tolerance in psychoanalysis – of the other, of the other in oneself (the internalised other), of the unconscious.

Organ tolerance after transplant – needing medication to accept a foreign graft. Or engineering tolerance – having enough capacity in a system to ensure it will operate even when some parts fail. But not drug tolerance of addicts.

Tolerance of the unconscious, some patients find difficult, yet necessary to function effectively.

Different kinds of spaces- private space (home); sacred space (church, temple etc.); public space (park, street); institutional space (school, hospital, etc.). Each space regulated differently, e.g. private space as free from intrusion, institutional the most regulated. Psychoanalytic protected setting a conjunction of private, sacred and institutional areas.

Moving musical performances – e.g. attending Allegri quartet. There is a human context,

intense communication between the players, intense in the way that poetry is complex and condensed, intensifying the experience. Music can move us because it expresses sadness etc. not by making us sad, though it can also do that. Moved by the sadness in a Shostakovich quartet but also uplifted, transformed.

The aesthetic emotion as part of our emotional equipment going back to the joy of creating something as a child, matching the flow and contours of the inner life, the inner music.

The many ways of listening to music – the sheer beauty of the musical patterns, the wonder at the complexity of themes brought into a unity (Bach), the expression of complex emotional states including awe and inner contemplation, bringing into renewed focus the flow of our inner life, if narrative such as lieder or opera or musicals there can be the interest in plots and characters bringing into relief deep truths about human relationships through the logic of the music, incitement to action such as in war, bringing communities together, inducing the desire to dance, consolation of loss, wistful nostalgia (Elgar), triumphant acceptance of human endeavour (Nielsen), icy tragic loneliness (Sibelius's *Tapiola*). Communication involves emotion, so music obviously then incorporates some emotion however 'pure'. Taking us on a musical journey.

Think of Puccini's *Tosca*. There is the beauty of the melodies, but also the tight structure of the music's organization. Recall the way that the church bells come into play at a dramatic point, with the Scarpia theme, the irony of evil against the background of the church bells (c.f. *The Godfather* christening scene).

The 'full' musical response includes the visual. Cf. Christian Blackshaw piano recital at *The Snape*. There is a human encounter, the visual quality of his playing as well as the sheer beauty and technical mastery, the lights dimmed, stillness, the spiritual quality of the man coming through, reverence for the music, music's soul.

Essence of evil, cancelling of the human subject. For example, in the film *Shoah* the way the guards dealt with the digging up of corpses and their burning. They were not to be called corpses or victims, but figures or *Schatten*, shit.

The radioactive nature of evil. Evil tries to limit the other as subject; kill, hurt, freeze, confine, torture etc. all ways of eliminating the other as subject. Evil as the absence of presence. What about malign presence? Lesser evils lead to greater evils.

Different kinds of perpetrators of evil an industrial scale. Individual perpetrators, experts like doctors and lawyers, desk perpetrators, grassroots killers, uniformed perpetrators. It's a denial of subjectivity in the killer themselves as well as the victim. Both elements are needed in order to kill people in this way.

Hateful ideologies are often around underground, waiting to be released again when societies' conditions are favourable to them. Should we pay more attention to the signs? Look at different ways that the individual's drives are modified, controlled, sublimated, diverted for the sake of civilisation and civic peace. Or on the contrary, how these drives can be whipped up by populists and their manifestation intensified, at times of war, for example, and economic depression.

Psychotic implants or injections or grafts infecting groups of ordinary people. Releasing them from ordinary social inhibitions. Civilisation is always in the balance, a fine balance; psychotic forces can easily take over the group making it impossible to have sane thoughts.

Even if Mahler felt alienated from the world, he carried his psychic home with him – the pluralistic world of his childhood and adolescence, the mixture of German music, military, nature, church, Jewish, and Bohemian music, incorporated into his symphonies. Music his true psychic home.

Look for the subject's dilemma in their dream associations. The multiple positions or places from where the dream thoughts arise in the unconscious – different from fragmentation. The plurality of voices is not chaotic fragmentation. Amalgamation of the different voices into an idiom or what Cézanne called temperament.

Poets use the dream thoughts to create a poetic dream. Analysts help the patient to find the dream thoughts from the dream.