

The Life of the Mind

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LIAM HUDSON knew from the age of sixteen that he wanted to be a psychologist and pursued that goal through an M.A. at Oxford and a Ph.D. from Cambridge. He has held a number of established posts —a fellowship at King’s College, Cambridge, chairs in Edinburgh and at Brunel, as a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton —but he has, in his own words, “always felt most at ease” in his home. So, in 1987, the Balas Copartnership was established, and his “private life and intellectual life” merged as he and his wife, Bernadine Jacot, formalized their collaboration in such varied fields as writing, photography, painting, and jewelry design. Together they have written *The Way Men Think* (1991) and *Intimate Relations* (1995). His other numerous publications include *Contrary Imaginations* (1966), *Frames of Mind* (1968), *The Cult of the Fact* (1972), *Bodies of Knowledge* (1982), and the novel *The Nympholepts* (1978).

I. STRANGELY FAMILIAR:
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BOUNDARIES
AND OF WHAT LIES BEHIND THEM

To give the Tanner Lectures is a dazzling honour. “Good heavens,” you find yourself saying—and experiencing a warm internal glow. All the usual ghosts arrive to haunt you, of course. (Are there two Hudsons? Has the invitation come to the right one?) But soon enough—decidedly querulous—a new internal voice makes itself heard. “Well, what have you been *up to* for the last forty years?” it wants to know. “All those investigations, *dozens* of them: they feel connected—neighbourhoods in the same district, parts of the same body—but *which* district, *which* body?”

The upshot is that I have two sets of contentions to explore, two stories to tell. The first lecture dwells on the mind and how it is organised. The second, superficially dissimilar, is set in the world of the visual arts and deals with that part of the mind’s activity often labelled “the imagination.” The link between the lectures is in fact close. Both seek answers to questions about what we can know: what we can know about one another and what we can know about ourselves. In the end, these become a question about psychology itself: not “Is it a science?”—uninteresting, because the answer depends on how you define “science”—but “Irrespective of what it is, can it get us anywhere worth getting?”¹

The lectures also have a common setting. Between them, they describe activities that occur more or less within arm’s reach of our

¹ My first step along the avenue this question opens was taken twenty-five years ago: L. Hudson, *The Cult of the Fact* (Cape, 1972). The “acquaintanceship” model of psychological inquiry advanced there now strikes me as insufficiently taut. In contrast, the language of boundaries and conversations offers more energy and a sharper focus. Long gone is the simple faith that “truth is to be had by radically objectivizing the procedures of inquiry”: C. Geertz, *After the Fact* (Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 135.

kitchen stove and that two of us —Bernadine Jacot and I —share: the planning of research and the analysis of data, writing and editing, the work of a photographic darkroom, jewellery design, carpentry, easel painting.² Where modern thought is as cosmopolitan as an airport, stateless as a credit card, I will try to hit a more domestic note —in the second lecture especially —and also a delectably regional one: in nuance at least, European rather than American, English —and residually Irish —rather than French or German.³

Before I begin, there is something to be said about psychology itself. There are many professional psychologists —at the present moment, at least a hundred thousand of us. If we each devote an hour a month to it, something like ten million person hours are now being spent per decade on psychological research.⁴ And if each of us is paid \$25,000 a year, the world's economies are committing no less than twenty-five billion dollars a decade to our enterprise in salaries alone. Talent there is in superabundance, and technical prowess too. A paperback dictionary of psychology, published a decade ago, lists more than 17,000 technical terms for us to use —including 29 distinguishable meanings of the word “validity.”⁵ But what unchallengeable advance in our knowledge of one another has this huge endeavour yielded? Most of us have difficulty in naming one. We have been seized by “physics envy,”

² We set up the Balas Copartnership in 1987. A cottage industry, it undertakes projects in the fields of psychology and the visual arts. “Balas” is an old-fashioned term for spinel, a rubylike gemstone.

³ “I do love that word so,” said Jack Yeats of the adjective “transpontine”: J. B. Yeats, *Sligo* (Wishart, 1931), p. 153. A nineteenth-century coinage, “transpontine” referred to that part of London south of the Thames, which metropolitans regarded as a cultural wilderness. The metaphor of the bridge lies close to the heart of these lectures, the second especially. So too does the sense of the desirable as lying on an obstacle's far side.

⁴ In 1995, excluding students, the British Psychological Society had 19,443 members. In 1960, three years after I graduated from Oxford, the number was 2,655.

⁵ A. S. Reber, *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* (Penguin, 1985).

it seems, and become lost in false science.⁶ In the realm of art, psychology's contributions have been especially inept, veering between the philistine and the dewy-eyed. I shall try to do better, but leave open the thought that I might not.⁷

The kind of psychology I practise depends on evidence. It works best if the material is

about people in the full possession of their powers;

profuse;

richly varied —sometimes systematically collected, sometimes “anecdotal”: literary texts, art works, pieces of theory, social descriptions, biographies, autobiographies;⁸

full of loose ends.

I want to show you what lovely stuff psychological evidence is: how it has a life of its own, and how bodies of it can linger in the mind like old friends — moving in and out of relation with one another as the focus of your curiosity evolves.

My sort of psychology also works best if

the sense of the mind as a system containing unconscious elements is never too far away.

Within that system, what we think or fail to think is invisibly linked to what we desire and fear. It is a system within which we

⁶ The phrase “physics envy” is borrowed from Albert Hirschman’s admirable *A Propensity to Self-Subversion* (Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁷ Gary Larson has drawn a pertinent cartoon. Its caption is “Neanderthal creativity.” Six drawings show a cave-dweller in loincloth carving an upright piano from the solid rock. In the sixth, he plays music on it by pounding the keyboard with his head: “Bong, Bong, Bong . . . I have a strong fellow-feeling with the Neanderthals, and would prize a solid stone piano as a possession but realise that my efforts to make sense of life and art may prove just as misguided as his.

⁸ “Anecdotal” is used as a term of abuse by psychologists committed to a laws-and-instances model of explanation and hostile to a cases-and-interpretations model. In the rough-and-tumble of practical inquiry, the two models often coexist in a state of productive tension.

are not merely censored, but censor ourselves — censor ourselves and deceive ourselves. “The world I am trying to understand,” said the economic theorist Albert Hirschman, “is one in which men think they want one thing and then upon getting it, find out to their dismay that they don’t want it nearly as much as they thought or don’t want it at all and that something else, of which they were hardly aware, is what they really want.”⁹

In broadest outline, the argument of these lectures stems from three claims:

- The life of the mind is governed by the need to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable.
- Our experience is organised by means of strategically placed boundaries that serve to separate the manageable from the unmanageable —the “in here” from the “out there.”
- Discovery and self-discovery reside in “conversations” between the worlds of experience these boundaries define.¹⁰

It is the resulting “landscapes” that render us intelligible to ourselves and one another as identifiable individuals with interior lives.

I have six inquiries in mind: three dating back to the 1960s and 1970s; three much more recent. All six jostle against one another; and in jostling, they generate a theme. What emerges from their interplay —not new, but in a new light —is the thought that,

⁹ A. Hirschman, *Shifting Involvements* (Martin Robertson, 1982), p. 21,

¹⁰ David Armstrong distinguishes two kinds of thought: Thinking 1 and Thinking 2. The first, exemplified by problem-solving, is the outcome of previous thinking. The second is thinking that enters the mind when we experience “a frustration, a limitation, an oppression, a terror, or a mystery.” The first belongs to us as individuals in a way that the second does not: D. Armstrong, “Thinking Aloud,” unpublished MS, Tavistock Consultancy Service, London. It is Thinking 2 that underlies the formation of the boundaries this lecture discusses. Inasmuch as it resolves anxiety or emptiness, thought of this kind is often received as revelatory. The next lecture concentrates on “Thinking 3”: thought, that is to say, which (1) arises from “conversations” within a single mind or set of minds; in which (2) tensions are symbolically resolved; and in the course of which (3) discoveries about matters of fact arise.

effortlessly, continuously, the mind's activity partitions itself. The six studies act as examples of the forms these partitionings take. (Six may seem excessive, but I am eager to show the variousness of boundaries; and how, in one guise or another, they crop up in study after study. As many more hover offstage, eager to be included.)

At heart, my argument is going to depend on the notion of such boundaries as a response to anxiety —an anxiety that is the product of the continual pressure exerted by opposed forces. In that sense, it is Heraclitean. Heraclitus, the Presocratic philosopher, is now famous for saying that you cannot step into the same river twice. But he also emphasised the role played by opposed forces in maintaining states of stability; saw reasoned argument and reflection as contributing to this process; and assumed both that knowledge is at root self-knowledge and that worthwhile argument typically has a circling, spiralling motion, gathering insight as it goes.¹¹

This first lecture will primarily concern boundaries; the second “conversations.” Neither idea is a contribution to grand theory. Both are essentially provisional, heuristic. Aids to inquiry, sketch-maps in the wilderness, they will serve their purpose if they help make future explorations less a matter of hit-or-miss than they have been heretofore.

Back in the 1960s, I used to visit schools and give mental tests to roomfuls of academically competent young men. At that time, a number of us were studying the fluency or flexibility of individuals' thought. Some of the best measures were the simplest: “How many uses can you think of for a brick?” I found that there were young men of high intelligence who would willingly give you only one answer: “to build a wall.” There were also young men whose powers of formal reasoning were much more modest, but

¹¹ W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Cambridge University Press, 1962).

who would give you half a dozen suggestions apparently without effort; some witty or fantastical, some mildly violent or obscene.¹² I also found that the first—"convergers," they came to be called—were then tending to specialise in mathematics and the various physical sciences; the second—the "divergers"—to specialise in disciplines like history and English literature.

Once, at an illustrious boarding school for boys, I invited a roomful of such sixteen-year-olds to retake the Uses of Objects Test, pretending as they did so that they were "John McMice." "McMice" was established as a well-known artist; an uninhibited, rather bohemian figure who often said things for effect, and who liked to shock people with coarse or gruesome jokes.¹³ I had expected a small but detectable shift in the young men's responses toward the unseemly. What I actually carried away with me from the flower of Britain's youth was an attaché case bulging with expressions of the sickeningly cruel, obscene, and grotesque. On the slenderest of pretences, a boundary had been crossed. Those young men had been willing to put their own names on the top of a sheet of paper and then write on it charnel-house imaginings. It was as if well-rehearsed systems of half-conscious fantasy were finding expression.¹⁴

Some research on dream recall sheds light in the same direction. One day, in the privacy of his office, my Cambridge professor, Oliver Zangwill, made a suggestion we both regarded as mildly seditious. At his prompting, I had written a book about my convergers and divergers. Now he asked, "Why don't you look at

¹² Such fluency came to be equated with "creativity," a clumsy (and covertly polemical) oversimplification.

¹³ Walter Sickert is said to have characterised the painter's inspiration as a "leech" (with a t)—a word defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a "craving" or "longing." Because, like "McMice," Sickert loved to shock, he will also have enjoyed the pun with the word "lecher" (without a t), meaning "a lewd or grossly unchaste man, a debauchee."

¹⁴ L. Hudson, *Frames of Mind* (Methuen, 1968).

their dreams?" Soon I moved to Edinburgh; and, finding myself next to one of the country's premier sleep laboratories, buckled to — or, more strictly, encouraged a pair of talented research students to buckle to.

Convergers and divergers, it proved, did differ in their ability to recall their dreams. If woken in the midst of rapid eye movement (or REM) sleep, the divergers — those drawn toward disciplines like history — always or almost always recalled a dream; whereas the convergers — those drawn toward mathematics and physical science — sometimes recalled and sometimes did not. They would either deny that they were dreaming or admit that they were, but say that they had forgotten what their dream was about.¹⁵

The boundary in question seemed to lie where you would expect it to lie: at the biological interface between the waking and sleeping states. But at least two sorts of thought pass before the mind's eye in the course of the average night. There are "primary" dreams: seemingly arbitrary eruptions into consciousness of the ego-alien. There are also "secondary" dreams: musings of the kind that can occupy much of our time while we are awake. The first occur in REM sleep, the Edinburgh evidence suggested, while the eyes are actually flickering; the second, both during REM sleep *between* bouts of eye movement and in other parts of the sleep cycle besides. It proved that if woken when they were musing, the convergers' recall became virtually flawless.¹⁶

What is at issue, then, is not the boundary between sleeping and waking thought; it is that between the sensible-seeming and the "mad" — between thought over which common-sense and the

¹⁵ M. Austin, "Dream Recall and the Bias of Intellectual Ability," *Nature* 231 (1971): 59.

¹⁶ M. A. M. Holmes, "REM Sleep Patterning and Dream Recall in Convergers and Divergers," Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh University, 1973; L. Hudson, *Night Life* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985).

conventions of narrative reign and thought over which they do not.¹⁷

In Edinburgh in the 1970s, I had charge of a small interdisciplinary research department. The university gave us the run of the education system as our subject-matter; and through no particular virtue of mine, we were hugely productive, books and papers pouring from us. As a colleague said, the place had a certain poetry.¹⁸ At the heart of the department, among a group of unusually gifted postgraduate students, an orthodoxy quickly formed. It was sociological in nature and its exclusions were fierce. Laboratory experiments were out. Data-sets were out. Psychoanalysis was out. And the attack was personal. To fail to recognise and acknowledge certain theoretical “truths” was to identify yourself as a defective moral being.¹⁹

Among our most successful postgraduate students, three groupings were discernible. The orthodox themselves, the “gate-keepers” of the temple. The “fellow travellers.” And the “outcasts.” The “gate-keepers” were anthropologists or sociologists—in academic background and research practice alike. While the “fellow travellers” did research compatible with the orthodoxy’s dictates, they had their first degrees elsewhere: in psychology, for example, or linguistics. The “outcasts” had backgrounds in psychology and did

¹⁷ A detail of sleep laboratory procedure reveals how comprehensively narrative permeates waking thought. Success in dream recall research depends on waking sleepers suddenly, with a buzzer, and interrogating them through an intercom about the last thought to pass through their minds. If you allow them time to gather their wits, the boundary between the primary and secondary dissolves: almost all dream reports become secondary, narrative ones. The implication, of course, is that the dreams psychotherapists analyse are heavily “narrativised” in the hours or days between occurrence and recall.

¹⁸ L. Hudson, “Picking Winners: A Case Study in the Recruitment of Research Students,” *New Universities Quarterly* (Winter 1977): 88; L. Hudson and B. Jacot, “The Outsider in Science,” in *Personality, Cognition and Values*, ed. C. Bagley and G. K. Verma (Macmillan, 1986).

¹⁹ All this despite the social sciences then being, and continuing to be, in a state of flux. “Learning to exist in a world quite different from that which formed you is the condition, these days, of pursuing research you can on balance believe in and writing sentences you can more or less live with”: Geertz, *After the Fact*, p. 133.

just the kind of laboratory research —the dream recall studies just mentioned —that the orthodoxy outlawed.

While you might expect publication to be at its most fluent at the heart of this orthodoxy or “paradigm,” events took a different turn. Although the “gate-keepers” published quite well, often in collaboration, none did their gifts full justice on the page. The “outcasts” published as single authors, and with evident difficulty, although, in retrospect, their work was arguably the most original the department produced. It was the “fellow travellers” who, like racing dinghies with a following wind, seemed positively to plane. Usually as single authors, they published as if magically released from a gravitational pull.

Among the “fellow travellers,” energies were released that no one would otherwise have guessed were there. One, his background a poor first degree in psychology, performed exactly the feat you would wish for a Ph.D. student. He finished his thesis on time. Before it was examined, it was accepted by a major publishing house as a book; and he had also used it to raise a large research grant. Over a cup of tea after his successful viva, his external examiner offered him a tenured post —which he declined, having already accepted another elsewhere.

Between them, these earlier studies reveal the partitioning of the acknowledged from the unacknowledged, the rational from the “mad,” and one tribe from the next. Identifiable groups of individuals proved to differ, what was more, some finding a particular barrier relatively easy to negotiate while others found it difficult or impossible. In part at least, this suggests, the individual’s sense of identity is determined by boundaries —by the boundaries which that particular person finds it easy to cross, which can be crossed only with difficulty, or which cannot be crossed at all.

In my three more recent inquiries, the same or closely analogous discontinuities make their presence felt. Their influence is

more complex, though, and their importance easier to overlook. The first of these studies, small-scale and exploratory, again centres on the distinction between the acknowledged and unacknowledged: between what people think and what they say. It concerns hospital patients, most of whom were male, many quite elderly, all suffering from intermittent claudication —a circulatory illness that gives you cramping pains in your legs when you walk and in severe cases can lead to amputation. Ten mildly ill patients were compared with ten whose symptoms were severe. Both were asked to complete questionnaires.²⁰

Several of the severely ill patients, none of whom could walk more than fifty metres without disabling pain, affirmed in general terms that their health was good. But when examined with care, their questionnaire responses revealed that they were *more* likely than the mildly ill to be thinking discriminatively about the inroads their illness was making on their everyday lives.²¹ The severely ill, that is to say, were engaged *both* in putting on a brave face *and* —behind the scenes, as it were —in telling themselves the truth about their body's deteriorating condition. The mildly ill seemed in comparison to have erected a barrier against this truth and to be thinking about their illness in stereotypical terms.²²

Once physical illness has taken a serious grip, and the responsibility for the body's well-being has passed into the hands of doc-

²⁰ L. Hudson, "Psyche and Soma: The Use of a Previously Neglected Psychological Marker," *Depression and Stress* 1 (1995): 165. The traffic between psyche and soma is, of course, two-way: "psychosomatic medicine" deals with physical illness suspected of having psychological causes; "somatopsychology" with the psychological response to physical illness, deformity, or disfigurement.

²¹ The method is simple and widely applicable —it could be used, for example, to measure the effects of professional training or of psychotherapy. A "diversity score" is calculated: each response an individual makes to an item in a questionnaire is compared with that individual's response to every other item, and the differences are then summed. Those with low diversity scores are those who make the same response to each item, irrespective of what that response is.

²² Aptly, stereotypical thought and perception has been characterised as "an analgesic devised by the mind to protect itself against anxiety": R. Gordon, "Stereotypy of Imagery and Belief as an Ego Defence," *British Journal of Psychology Monograph Supplements* (1962): 95.

tors and nurses, there is a sense in which patients are free to relax into their illness. The need for defensive vigilance wanes, and a traffic in truth within the individual can get under way. This finding points to the importance of “locus of control” as an organising principle not only in the management of anxiety but in the achievement of candour. It is also congruent with those more speculative formulations —for instance, Roland Barthes’s— which envisage our ability to grasp the truth about ourselves as dependent not on the control we exert over ourselves but on the loss or abandonment of that control.²³

The second of my recent projects concerns the cast of the female imagination as opposed to the cast of the male.

Back in the 1960s, it was already obvious—not only to experts like Ralph Greenson and Robert Stoller but to Bernadine Jacot and myself—that the developmental path followed by the young male *must* be different from that followed by the female.²⁴ If boys are to perceive themselves as male, they must identify with their fathers; and in order to do this, they must separate themselves from their mothers, to whom they were previously symbiotically tied.

Returning to the problem twenty years later, it occurred to us that if the small boy severs the symbiotic bond with his mother and subsequently aligns himself with a creature—his father—until then distant or “other,” the male imagination must be structured ambiguously. For the male, otherness must always carry within it

²³ R. Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse* (Cape, 1979); and, particularly, *Camera Lucida* (Fontana, 1984).

²⁴ R. R. Greenson, “Dis-identifying from Mother: Its Special Importance for the Boy,” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 49 (1968): 370; R. J. Stoller, “Symbiosis Anxiety and the Development of Masculinity,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 30 (1974): 164. While a convenient shorthand, the notion of identification at the centre of such theorising—our own no less than Greenson’s and Stoller’s—may mislead. It assumes an existentially committing form of imitation by the infant of a parent. But events may be more complex: a gradual accretion of attachments and aversions, behavioural repertoires and imagined roles.

rumours of the intimately familiar; while the intimately familiar must always seem at least a fraction strange.

“Wounded” in this way, we argued, the male imagination will typically be subject to reversals in which things are treated as though they were people, people as though they were things. It will objectify what it desires; and it will be activated at root by fantasies of repossession and control. It is a cast of mind that helps explain the existence of just those intellectual and personal qualities —some admirable, some not —identified as typically “male.” At a humble level, those of the gadgeteer and those of the pornographer. At a more exalted level, both the rapt absorption of an Isaac Newton in systems totally devoid of human reference and the imagery of painters like Edgar Degas, Pierre Bonnard, and Henri Matisse, who, in their various ways, harnessed their fascination with the female body to the purposes of art.²⁵

Now this exercise of the theoretical clockwork may be quite wrong. Historically, most are. What is plainly right about it is that it conceives of males and females as entertaining imagined vistas that are in principle incommensurate.

This impression is heightened if you allow that small girls experience developmental vicissitudes of their own. Inasmuch as she acquires a biologically appropriate focus for her desires, the small girl sets herself up as a rival to her mother for her father’s attention. But she remains symbiotically linked to her mother.²⁶ Con-

²⁵ L. Hudson and B. Jacot, *Intimate Relations* (Yale University Press, 1995). Unclear is the extent to which these patterns are culturally specific —the extent, for example, to which they arise in societies practising polygamy or polyandry.

²⁶ Accordingly, women are often said to live-in-relation, their distinctive gifts empathetic. A significant vein of theorising results: see, for example, N. J. Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (University of California Press, 1978); C. Filligan, *In a Different Voice* (Harvard University Press, 1982); E. F. Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (Yale University Press, 1985). We are struck, nevertheless, by the number of women whose attitude to intimate relations is manipulative, and who are unempathetic, except perhaps in matters of sexual attraction; and by those men whose intuitive awareness of others’ motives is finely —if defensively —honed. Psychological differences between the sexes typically express themselves in terms of nuance, we believe: see Hudson and Jacot, *Intimate Relations*, p. 10, where a branch-

sequently, she has no internal buffer or defence with which to protect herself from what she may see as her mother's vengeful ire.

All this is well-rehearsed; perhaps too well-rehearsed. In psychoanalytic shorthand, the developmental vicissitude of the small boy is one of "gender identity"; that of the small girl, of "object choice." But overlooked —or so we believe —is the familiar argument's last twist. Namely, that the expression of heterosexual desire in adult women will tend automatically to reactivate both these primitive anxieties and their attendant anger and depression. If this argument is right, women will find that sexual intimacy with a man, and especially intimacy that is existentially committing, will bring anger and depression in its wake. It will do so both because men are inadequate to what Stoller once called "the rigours of intimacy," and for reasons inherent to the mother/daughter bond.

My third recent study took the form of a collaboration with a psychoanalyst. It came to be known as the "weeping doctor" project. As with the investigation of patients suffering intermittent claudication, it focuses attention on the distinction between what is said and what is known. It also encourages one to look more closely at what happens when members of adjacent disciplines or professions choose to work in harness.²⁷

Since the 1980s, the glory-days of Margaret Thatcher, the British health service has been in turmoil. Especially awkwardly placed have been its "senior house officers," young men and women still learning the ropes, but already with serious responsibilities

ing model is offered in explanation and the example of cosmetic plastic surgery is briefly explored.

²⁷ R. Hale and L. Hudson, "The Tavistock Study of Young Doctors," *British Journal of Hospital Medicine* 47 (1992): 452. This paper had a small but detectable impact on the politics of British medicine. Partly in response to our findings, one clinical tutor altered the course of her career. She is now a reforming regional dean, with control of pertinent budgets, and my psychoanalytic colleague and I work for her and advise her.

to bear. Nominally in the care of a clinical tutor, they have in reality been a lost tribe.

We interviewed twenty senior house officers, selected at random; guaranteed them absolute confidentiality; and invited them both to speak their minds and to fill in a few questionnaires. One proved to be coping admirably, and four to be coping well. Ten were in one sort of trouble or another. Five were in trouble by any standards dire. More than one doctor shed tears in our presence; more than one rehearsed thoughts of suicide; two were revealed by their questionnaire responses to be in the midst of depressive illnesses.²⁸

Both as a technical exercise and as a piece of social engineering, the “weeping doctor” project remains a source of satisfaction to us both. Our collaboration was not without its stresses; but first, let me say something about those doctors: the ones who wept and the ones who needed to weep but could not. Those in the worst trouble typically claimed to be speaking about their wretchedness for the first time in their lives. Previously, it had been bottled up: partly under the influence of home cultures that require men to be stoical; partly by the culture of hospital medicine, within which coping is an imperative need. Implicit in these interviews, again, there is the sense of a barrier separating what the individual knows from what it is politic, even possible, to voice.

Sociological theory leads us to expect that the investigators, one a psychologist and the other a psychoanalyst, will have been bound to experience strain when working together. Rooted in dissimilar cultures, they will have differed not only over what the facts meant, but what the facts *were*. But in the “weeping doctor” project, this was not the difficulty the two collaborators faced. After each interview, the psychologist wrote up a sketch of the doctor just inter-

²⁸ Those in the worst trouble were from Africa and Asia. The National Health Service in London, it became clear, was being sustained by a black underclass. Predictably perhaps, the government department that had produced the small sum required for the first round of our research — the sterling equivalent of \$7,500 — declined to entertain a sequel.

viewed and passed it to the psychoanalyst. A few details aside, agreement was quickly reached. Each of the twenty interviews had been an experience shared. However, awkwardnesses *were* encountered; and the focus of the collaborators' discrepant anxieties fell where you might least expect to find it: on the apparently trivial question of punctuality. The psychologist became tenser and tenser on the subject; the psychoanalyst, normally accurate, became more and more wayward. And they found themselves in a curious bind. Neither could articulate to the other what was going on.

It is hard to avoid the impression that, because both interdisciplinary and productive, this collaboration distilled potentially corrosive juices —these gathering in a “sump” adjacent to the process of inquiry itself.²⁹

There is nothing new about explanatory models that allow ambiguity and dissonance an activating role. They form part of the psychologist's heritage.³⁰ If we are to make sense of boundaries and of what lies beyond them, one such model seems to me especially apt. It has its roots in the Heraclitean notion of unremitting tension between opposed forces. It found expression in Friedrich Nietzsche; was reformulated by the psychoanalyst Otto Rank; and was tidied up in the 1960s by the psychologist Donald MacKinnon.³¹ The mind emerges from this vein of theorising as

²⁹ Beyond gesturing in the direction of “chemistry,” no one knows why some collaborations work well, others fail. Often the most unlikely looking succeed — Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones, Margaret Thatcher and her press secretary Bernard Ingham: R. A. Paskauskas, *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones 1908–1939* (Harvard University Press, 1993); H. Young, *One of Us* (Macmillan, 1989). An oddity of Margaret Thatcher's career is that, while in other respects painstaking, she seems to have picked the men she worked with so harmoniously in the batting of an eye: Hudson and Jacot, *Intimate Relations*, p. 20.

³⁰ Cognitive dissonance theory is an obvious but troubling instance: L. Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Row, Peterson, 1957). Why did this promise so much and yet prove so barren? Perhaps the fault lay in the footling classroom experiments *de rigueur* at the time.

³¹ D.W. MacKinnon, “Creativity and Images of the Self,” in *The Study of Lives*, ed. R. W. White (Prentice-Hall, 1963); “Personality and the Realisation of

structured in terms of opposed desires and their attendant fears. On the one hand, the desire for independence and self-sufficiency and the attendant fear of being isolated or abandoned. On the other, the desire for blissful intimacy and the attendant fear of being stifled, swallowed, smothered, digested.

Most of us systematically undermine our own best efforts, the theory suggests; and it is only exceptional individuals who break loose, finding themselves free, however intermittently, to perform feats of “will and deed.” MacKinnon studied architects, and found the weight of his evidence sitting comfortably with this view. To my eye, it places centrally what belongs centrally:

- it is genuinely bipolar, embodying opposed attractors ;
- it is existential, in that the fears and desires it seeks to reconcile concern our very beings ;
- it allows that the mind seeks to resolve internally generated conflict at one remove, by transposing it to the world of symbolically significant forms —among them, of course, those of academic psychology itself;
- it alerts us to the protean wiles of those forces at work within each of us that act to prevent us achieving what we most want to achieve.

Not only do we undermine our own best efforts; we organise and operate our institutions in ways that ensure that these efforts are undermined.³²

The “imagination,” this model suggests, is the name we give to the mind’s attempts to resolve conflicts, and especially existential conflicts, in symbolic form. These are attempts in which yet

Creative Potential,” *American Psychologist* 20 (1965): 273. Rank is a figure over whom a penumbra of madness still hangs. The slur seems to have originated with Ernest Jones.

³² A university’s committee structure, for example: doubly seductive because both a model of representative democracy and a conspiracy against original thought.

another boundary, perhaps the most versatile of them all —that between the relevant and irrelevant, the useful and useless —continually transposes itself. Typically, the mind seems to achieve this obliquely by drawing on previous ventures' residues: the loose ends left dangling, the raw materials abandoned. Our dreams and fantasies act for us in this respect like a bric-a-brac stall, inviting us to rescue potentially useful items from the junk, and the occasional treasure too. (Among bric-a-brac a few years ago, we found an eighth-century Mayan jade necklace. Fittingly, it was sold to us as "plastic.")³³

Where have my stitching between these six inquiries led? "John McMice." The two kinds of dream and their recall. Those gifted research students. The old gentlemen with claudication. Male and female casts of mind. The "weeping doctors," and the two colleagues who interviewed them.

The mind *is* organised in terms of boundaries, these investigations suggest.³⁴ The resulting segregations emerge, in fact, as our prime evidence of the mind's power to regulate its own activity. It is the psychological boundary that divides thought, otherwise seamless and emotionally charged, into compartments; and that allows separate but functionally related subsystems to articulate themselves—one of which is often but by no means always acknowledged and espoused, the other often but by no means always

³³ "Garbage" theories of dreaming —attempts to explain dream-thought as the central nervous system shedding rubbish left over from earlier problem-solving episodes —ignore this power of imaginative transformation: F. H. C. Crick and G. Mitchison, "The Function of Dream Sleep," *Nature* 304 (1983): 111.

³⁴ The boundary is a topic to which dynamically minded psychologists and psychoanalysts keep returning. For Norman O. Brown, writing in the 1960s, "the conclusion of the whole matter is, break down the boundaries, the walls. ..." In contrast, Jacques Lacan saw individuals as permanently estranged from the objects of their desire. We are each fated to live, he believed, with man's "excentricité radicale de soi à lui-même." Both views now seem a shade dated, as if geared to a set of inarticulate needs no longer quite our own. Both are univocal, seeing the alienation of human experience as flowing from the same source: repression. It is as if all wars must be fought in the Somme.

disowned or anathematised. Where Freud saw the mind as structured in terms of one fundamentally significant boundary — the discontinuity that creates the unconscious — the mind emerges from the present inquiries as organised in an altogether more complex and mobile fashion.³⁵

Sometimes, but by no means invariably, the psychological boundary will form at a point coincident with a clearly marked boundary in the external world; and the distinctions I have so far mentioned — those between the acknowledged and the unacknowledged, the relevant and the irrelevant, the sane and the “mad,” one tribe and the next — can act there in concert. As a consequence, the segregation of academic disciplines, for example, is a tribal matter, but not purely so. It is also psychological, the equivalent of a distinction between intimately significant “smells.”³⁶

As they have displayed themselves here, psychological boundaries are

adaptive: springing into being and consolidating themselves whenever we experience anxiety that would otherwise be unmanageable.

³⁵ Freud depicted the “unconscious” as a single system with specific characteristics: those of primary process thought. More colloquially, it is often spoken of as if it were an engine, situated offstage, controlling all the more important aspects of our consciously accessible thought and action. Such evidence as we have — of problem-solving, for instance, and of poetry like Rainer Maria Rilke’s that shows every sign of having been composed offstage — suggests, on the contrary, that the unconscious’s action is often eminently “rational.” We would be wise to be cautious, therefore: to treat the “unconscious” as the name we give to the mind’s capacity to startle or subvert itself — and to see this capacity as subserved by a loose-knit constellation of mini-unconsciousnesses, each operating according to principles of its own.

³⁶ Marriage patterns vary markedly between academic fields: L. Hudson and B. Jacot, “Marriage and Fertility in Academic Life,” *Nature* 229 (1971): 531. Divorce rates also seem to vary sharply within a field from decade to decade, depending on whether it is in a routinely businesslike state or in upheaval. They were more than twenty-five times as high among those British biologists who had risen to eminence in the decade before 1920, when their discipline was being transformed into a mathematically based, experimental enterprise, than among those who rose to eminence in the decade after 1920. Sulloway reports analogous changes in the roles played by firstborn and younger sons: F. J. Sulloway, *Born to Rebel* (Little Brown, 1996).

Janus-faced: reflecting both pressures from without and pressures from within.

ego-defining: separating “us” from “them,” “in here” from “out there.”

self-consorting: limiting our access to our own thoughts and desires.

facetting: segregating within each individual the perceptions, beliefs, and capabilities expressed in one role or relationship from those expressed in another.

emergent: evolving from one developmental stage to the next as we learn about life and ourselves; from the stage, for example, when time seems boundless, to that when you know it is short.

The mechanisms underlying the formation of such discontinuities are the mechanisms of repression and denial, splitting and blocking, dissociation and displacement, familiar from psychopathology. While seeming substantial, some boundaries are breached on excuses that could scarcely be flimsier: the charade of “being” John McMice. But whether fortified or not, experience is typically segmented into the safe-but-boring and the dangerous-but-exciting, a distinction deeply implanted within our culture. (The first, painstaking research shows, is associated with the perception of physical science, the second with the perception of the arts; the first with manliness, the second with androgyny. The linkages in question are among the most powerfully consensual the human sciences have so far unearthed.³⁷)

Even so, the influence of the psychological boundary is often subtle. Misgivings and temptations act on one another, delicately poised judgements of cost and benefit are weighed. A final example, chosen as providing a bridge to the subject matter of the

³⁷ L. Hudson, “The Stereotypical Scientist,” *Nature* 213 (1967): 228.

next lecture, reveals this complexity. In his commentary on *My Secret Life*, Steven Marcus discusses the anonymous Victorian author's efforts to bribe a working-class girl into having sexual intercourse with him. She keeps returning and is plainly tempted: by his money of course, but also by the prospect of the adult world's desires. In the end, the roué proffers a sovereign and then attempts physical force. She fights her way clear, runs off, and there the episode ends. What she has preserved—just—is her “respectability.” Marcus concludes that “in the degree to which that girl succeeded in denying her sexuality to the author, and to other men, and in the degree to which she even made her own sexuality inaccessible to herself, in that degree might she have the chance of extending her humanity in other directions.”³⁸ Her chances of a decent life depended—as they depend for the Lady in John Milton's *Comus*—on her ability to treat sex as a venue within which principle can confront temptation: to construct and maintain a boundary easily dismissed as prudish. And, as in *Comus*, the decision is morally charged. The girl can take the sovereign and succumb; reject the sovereign and succumb; or take the sovereign and run. It is the fourth option she takes though; and most of us applaud as she takes it. She runs, leaving both roué and sovereign behind.

In the inquiries I have described there is also a strategic and generalisable implication for all those committed by nature or pro-

³⁸ S. Marcus, *The Other Victorians* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p. 148. At the heart of intimacy—as John Hollander notes—there lies a sense of distance. Martin Buber's “I/Thou” relationship remains stable only as long as the parties to it remain separate: “too-close-and-we'd-not-be-we”: J. Hollander, *Tesserae and Other Poems* (Knopf, 1995), p. 46. In *Intimate Relations*, Bernadine Jacot and I conjecture that the values of sexual intimacy, notably those of equality and what Milton calls “chastity,” are emergent properties of erotic experience itself. Given the opportunity, we suggest, “chastity”—the desire to be sexual with the right person at the right time and in the right way—will arise of its own accord in anticipation of physical intimacy; equality will arise of its own accord as a product of sexual intimacy's implicit “conversation.” This view sees values as achievements akin to aesthetic discriminations, not as quasi-theological rights imported to the sexual arena from elsewhere.

fession to focus one another's capabilities, release one another's inventive powers. It is not a question of tearing boundaries down, nor of weaving seamless fabrics. Rather, of giving the Heraclitean properties of the mind their due:

parents trying to form their children as moral beings,
 university teachers transmitting this discipline or that,
 psychotherapists struggling to contain their patients' chaos and
 their own,
 managers redesigning organisations,
 architects and designers fashioning our material environments.³⁹

In each of these capacities, it seems to me, our aims are —or ought to be —the same:

- *both* to encourage the formation of those boundaries that contain anxiety and aid the mind's elaboration;
- *and* to foster the art of "conversation" across them.

The snag is obvious. Boundaries not only cut us off from what we cannot manage; they render what we cannot manage alluring. Is this alienation of our experience escapable? In general, no, I shall argue next time; but in detail yes. Moments of access do arise. In episodes of discovery and self-discovery. In love. In the arts —and in the arts especially, because it is there that skills exist

³⁹ A preoccupation with boundaries is central to the Japanese architect's fashioning of social space: S. Uchida, "The Bounds of Privacy: Boundary and Domain in Japanese Culture," in *Interior Design: Uchida, Mitsuhashi, Nishioka and Studio 80*, vol. 2 (Taschen, 1996). Originally the boundary between the sacred and the profane, the notion of *kekai* encompasses the distinctions between public and private, inside and outside; and it takes straightforward as well as subtle forms: not only physical obstacles, "brute *kekai*," but "*kekai* devices" like hedges and gates, and "suppositional," "conventional," and "taboo *kekai*" — "tacit understandings" about, for example, who may spy on whom. For the Japanese, bounded intervals of space or silence are positive elements in any composition. The expression *manuke* — literally, space (*ma*) missing (*nuke*) — means grossly stupid in Japanese and is a serious insult or derogation: K. Seike, *The Art of Japanese Joinery* (Weatherhill, 1982), p.16.

to engineer them. For the arts are preeminently venues in which thoughts that are strangers to one another can meet and mate; in which our most deep-seated desires can flow in and out of what is actually there.

II. THE VISUAL ARTS AS LABORATORIES OF TRUTH AND VALUE

My first lecture conveyed, I hope, a deep affection for psychology as a branch of natural history. I am now going to talk about the imagination; specifically, about *photography, portrait painting, and jewellery design*. I want to use these three forms in establishing the imagination as a species of discovery and in defining the ground on which the distinctive discoveries of the visual arts are made. Willed and engineered, I shall argue, these depend on puncturing the membrane that separates us from those parts of our experience that have been occluded or scotomised, denied or repressed. In the arts — although not of course the sciences — these are discoveries of *psychological truth* and *perceived value*.¹

Unfortunately, the visual arts have become stamping grounds for ideologues. In contrast, I am going to explore the nature of the psychological investment of those who make art objects and those who cherish them. I want to examine these three art forms from the inside, as it were, as *practices* — photographs that leave hands smelling of developer and fixer, paintings that spread their pigment onto clothes, jewels that are personal discoveries and inventions. I shall speak about them as part of a household's daily rhythm and have chosen my slides with this domestic context in view.

Having touched — briefly, but with feeling — on each of these enterprises, I shall set the visual arts and psychology side by side.

¹ If there were a third lecture, it would deal with writing fiction, and with the paradoxical access to the psychological truth it permits the author, an access that science seems to foster but in practice precludes.

When abutted in this way, the two activities both complement and destabilise one another. Each offers the other —in Jacques Lacan’s phrase —“an insistent and disobliging ‘other scene.’”² Bringing my argument full circle, I want to end where I began: with psychology —with its essential nature and with what it might yet become.

In the first lecture, the mind was characterised as a landscape defined by boundaries, many of them fortified; and the disciplines of the arts and sciences were envisaged as part of this arrangement. There are also boundaries internal to each discipline, as there are to each mind. It is on these internal disciplinary frontiers, half-hidden from the outsider’s eye, that I shall concentrate —because, as a psychologist, they interest me most, and because, if I am right, it is here that the “conversations” of deepest significance occur.³

Do bear in mind, too —I will remind you of it later —that the oldest use given in the *Oxford English Dictionary* for the word “conversation” is “sexual intimacy,” recorded as early as 1511. This meaning lingers in the lawyer’s use of the phrase “criminal conversation” (often abbreviated to “crim.con”) to mean adultery. It was only later in the sixteenth century that the word came to mean “interchange of thought and words.” The most eloquent of all the metaphors for the forms of “conversation” discussed here is sex itself. The breaching of the boundary between one body and another serves as analogue and echo of the breaching of the boundary between one discipline and another; between one element of a given discipline and another element; between the con-

² M. Bowie, *Freud, Proust and Lacan* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 163 .

³ While they focus the otherwise inchoate, and are in that respect indispensable, disciplines necessarily limit and easily stifle. They become dysfunctional at the point, often surprisingly early in their lives, when conformity and bureaucratisation set in. Excitement then arises when the frontiers separating one discipline from others are breached; and when violations occur of the ritualised “dos” and “don’ts” on which a discipline’s sense of its own identity depends.

stituent subsystems of a single mind; between one mind and another mind.

If you use a camera with any seriousness, you will probably take hundreds of photographs each year, and may take thousands. But only a tiny minority will “work.” You may take many dozens of photographs of your dog or your garden, your spouse or your children, but find that only one or two remain alive. Such images are truthful, you tell yourself; not just true-to-life in the way that facsimiles of dog, garden, spouse, or children would be, but samplings of a truth that lies behind or beyond appearances.

What is it that breathes life into such images? And what allows the imaginative impact of a few to deepen the longer you live with them? The rudiments of an answer are to be found, I think, at the intersection between two sorts of perception: the perception of *strangeness* and the perception of *movement*—movement that is frozen, contained, implied. This intersection leads in turn to a generative paradox, inseparable from the grip exerted on us not only by successful photographs, but by successful portraits and pieces of jewellery too. Namely, that

- We are moved by images which we perceive as vividly life-like, but know to be lifeless; and
- We are driven, many of us, to reduce what moves us most to this lifeless form.

Elsewhere, perhaps pretentiously, I have called this the “paradox of petrification.” Intense emotional responses that seem designed by natural selection to regulate our exchanges with our fellow human beings find their home in what is still. *Dead* still.⁴

While there are photographs that combine the illusions of strangeness and movement in ways that shock, I have quieter ef-

⁴ L. Hudson, *Bodies of Knowledge* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982). The links between psychology, photography, and surrealism are alive and well: R. Krauss and J. Livingston, *L'Amour Fou* (Arts Council of Great Britain, 1986).

fects primarily in mind. Empathetically, we enter the scene as a bull terrier stands with her front feet on the kitchen table, her gaze unblinking. Equally, we enter that defined by a pair of walking legs, experiencing the movement as our own.

The carpets in Sotheby's saleroom become Tuscan hills as the porters turn them. Reminiscent of a Magritte, dresses hung up to dry seem to contain the remembered warmth and movement of the body they will soon clothe again.

Courtesy of the motor-drive, the perceptions of strangeness and movement have a further twist. Sensations, meanings, can become ensnared between pairs of still images or in sequences of them. My brother Sean took a remarkable pair as the Romanian miners invaded Bucharest in 1991. When one of these images appeared in the *Sunday Times*, the caption read: "Strong-arm politics: angry miners occupy the parliament building during their rampage." In truth the revolutionary impulse had already drained away, and one of the young miners was in tears. Through the broken window, the miners outside the parliament building and the caretaker figure inside are joined by the images' strangest feature: conspicuously relaxed, their hands.

We can also do experiments. A sequence of eight images of sunlight falling on a coffeepot elicited forthright responses — and also judgments that differed from individual to individual. When I last showed them to an audience, most saw them as "mysterious." A minority did not. Roughly half saw them as "erotic," roughly half did not. Relatively few were unwilling to commit themselves one way or the other. Likewise, large majorities were willing to commit themselves about adjectives as seemingly recondite as "invasive" and "illicit." Interesting, too, is the fact that as many as a third of the audience admitted that they had experienced an impulse to override their spontaneous impressions of those coffeepot images in the light of a principle — like "rationality." The echo, here, is of the Edinburgh dream recall studies, and of the convergers who sometimes recalled a dream when woken from REM

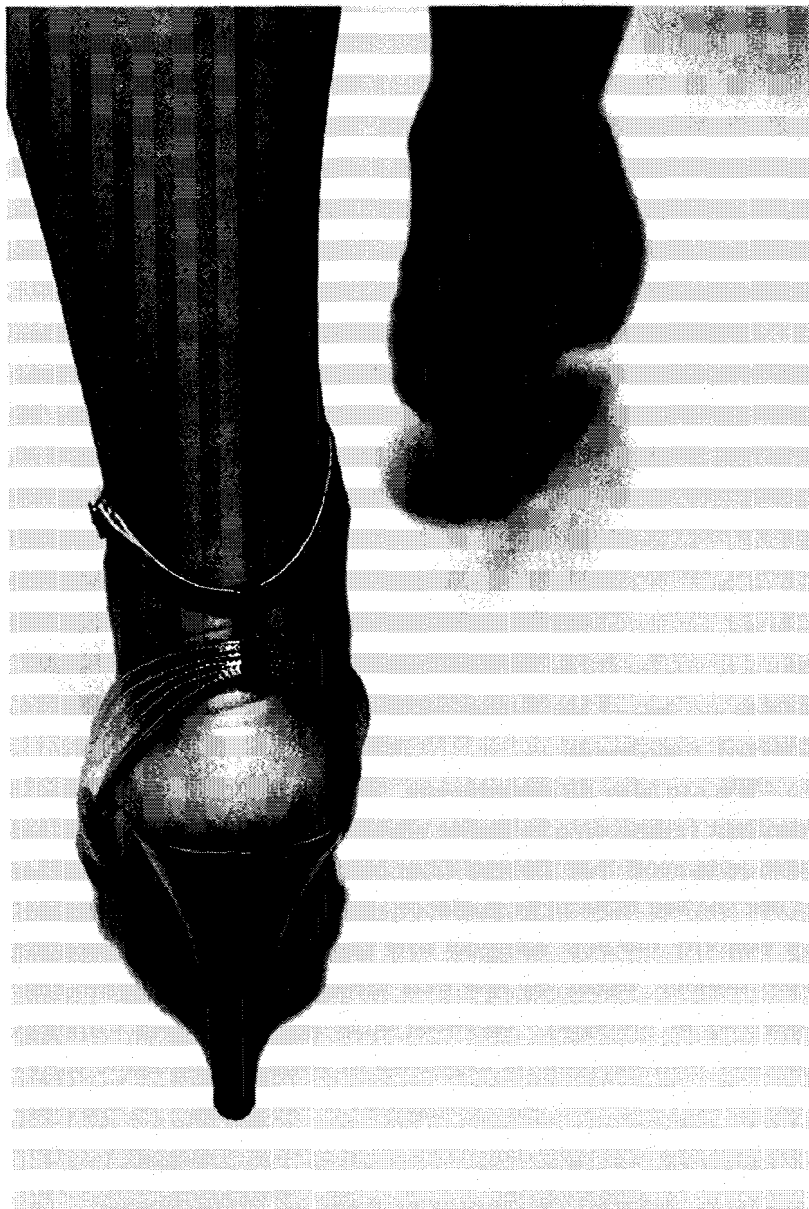


PLATE 1. "Walking Legs"

sleep and sometimes did not. Perhaps as they awoke they too were censoring, and were at least half-aware of doing so.

Needing material for a dust-jacket, we recently took photographs of ourselves doing one of the things we do well together: eat. The resulting images surprised us: they contain an element of apparent dislocation we would not otherwise have known was there. But the photographs in question were self-portraits, and to that extent, we were still in charge. However inadvertent, the truths revealed were truths we were in a position to monitor and control. There remained a more radical experiment to perform: commission a portrait by a stranger. The space created could be dangerous; but it might also be one in which truths of unfamiliar kinds would surface —for the subjects, of course, but perhaps for the portraitist too.

Having seen his portrait of the actress Janet Suzman, our choice fell not on a photographer but on the painter Hans Schwarz. Now in his seventies, Schwarz works in the expressionist tradition of his native Austria. The most memorable of his images unite a rapturous colour sense with Oskar Kokoschka-like distortions: Kokoschka, who was thought by his contemporaries to have “X-ray eyes.”⁵ As the poet Paul Valéry learnt when sitting for his own portrait, the artist engages in a “secret struggle with the self.” He invents “hidden conditions and restrictions, invisible obstacles which accentuate his design, impede his acquired facility, delay his satisfaction.”⁶ But while engaged in this “invisible inner work,” Schwarz, like Kokoschka, seemed instinctively to capture facets of his sitters’ personalities they had not realised were exposed. Witness his triple portrait, now enjoying pride of place at the National Portrait Gallery in London, in which the three promi-

⁵ F. Whitford, *Oskar Kokoschka* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), p.53.

⁶ P. Valéry, *Degas, Manet and Morisot* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 176. Valéry suggests that this secret struggle is of deeper significance than the work it finally yields.

ment trade union leaders —bastions of the Left —posture like property tycoons.⁷

Schwarz proved to work with astonishing speed and impatience. Kokoschka would sometimes paint portraits with fingers rather than a brush, scratching in details with his nails, and more than a trace of this impetuosity was detectable in Schwarz. It seemed both to gratify and irk him to produce a “Suzman” for us. He said later —very much to our surprise —that he experienced his sitters, often, as trying to intimidate him. He was both intrigued by and wary of my profession; and, although I had his prior permission, was both interested in and irritated by my efforts with a camera, snapping him as he painted. After lunch, somewhat gleefully, he put me into the space in the image’s bottom right-hand corner — as Rumpelstiltskin, crouched, answering a call of nature.

Later there were corrections, especially to Bernadine’s hand. But at the end of a second visit, there was in our midst an image we perceived as formidable, and in which we had been translated from our everyday selves into the subject-matter of art.⁸ I took pains in framing it, adapting the design of a mirror frame recently made from off-cuts and sundry odds and ends.⁹ Poised above the hi-fi, the ensemble now dominates our sitting room.

An act of personal representation had occurred, and the colour slides taken at the time display it “sunny side up.” But without in

⁷ It hangs there, at right angles to one of the city’s more extraordinary sights. Forbidding, mesmerising: the model Margaret Thatcher, the artist, the “high priest of erotic photography,” Helmut Newton: P. Booth, *Master Photographers* (Macmillan, 1983).

⁸ This relation of sitter to artist shifted subtly in the nineteenth century, as Malraux says. Georges Clemenceau found Rodin’s portrait of him offensive and demanded that it be reworked. In contrast, Manet’s portrait of him he could accept —as we accept Schwarz’s —as “art”: A. Malraux, *Museum without Walls* (Secker and Warburg, 1967), p.38.

⁹ Each frame bounds a space, of course, and marks it out as privileged; but — one of a series —this frame also exploits the imaginative significance of rubbish. The detritus of earlier ventures coalesces in the mind’s eye and becomes the stimulus for a venture not previously entertainable.

the least knowing what they were, both Bernadine and I had felt darker currents astir. Invisible in colour, this darker something shines through in black-and-white.¹⁰ Although Schwarz disliked them, and was even a little shocked by them, the black-and-white images I took of him seem part of the truth about a many-layered transaction.

It was as if there were a silent traffic between the three of us; eminently deniable, but amounting in retrospect to a species of contraband.”

In becoming stains on a large rectangular sheet of paper, we had learnt things about ourselves we might have learnt from a psychoanalyst. What Schwarz revealed was something of our own “invisible inner work”: a couple no longer young, anxious to preserve youth’s candour in one another’s eyes.”

At this point, doubters may suspect that I am about to subject art to a psychoanalytic explanation. But psychology and art are set side by side here as “other scenes” in order to disoblige. So let me move from people-as-objects to objects themselves. At heart, we remain *animists*, I want to claim. Our judgments of truth and value are intimately bound up with artifacts; not as substitutes for people, but as vehicles in their own right for the subtlest of our thoughts and yearnings.¹³

¹⁰ Why is the black-and-white photograph so often more eloquent than the coloured photograph —when this advantage has no counterpart in painting? It is presumably no accident that some of the most enduring disquieting of surrealism’s images are Bellmer’s black-and-white photographs of dolls that he hand-tinted: L. Hudson, “The Photographic Image,” in *Imagery: Current Developments*, ed. P. J. Hampson, D. F. Marks, and J. T. E. Richardson (Routledge, 1990).

¹¹ Each of the six relations uniting artist, model, spectator, and image is fraught with surprise: Hudson, *Bodies of Knowledge*, pp. 138–50.

¹² In response to Christoforo Allori’s head of a page, Valéry says “Wait, pretty boy, till the bright smile takes its precious flight . . . Your beauty will not fail to pass to other young faces . . . and you will grow into some man. All your candor gone, you will no longer, alack be Adam —but some dour, ingrown reflection”: Valéry, *Degas, Manet and Morisot*, p. 211.

¹³ This is most obviously so in the case of music.



PLATE 2. "The Portraitist"

Diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds. Geological flukes and freaks, they deserve the psychologist's close attention because they make it easy to differentiate monetary value from aesthetic value; confront us with the tension between art and engineering; and help make plain what it is for a designer to get somewhere worth getting.

However obliquely, to speak about them also constitutes a gesture of gratitude to Obert Tanner, the remarkable man who endowed these lectures; a philosopher, but also a man intimately concerned with the jeweller's art.¹⁴

Most diamonds are sold in terms of what they lack: their lack of colour; their lack of flaws; their lack of softness, vastly harder than the next hardest substance, sapphire.¹⁵ Analogous but different rules govern the marketability of sapphires, rubies, and emeralds.¹⁶ Gemstones are typically sold by weight. Diamonds are weighed by the "point," there being a hundred (decimal) points to the "carat," and five carats to the gram. Today, methods of facetting and polishing are so standardised that a brilliant-cut diamond of one carat can be assumed to have a diameter of 6.5 millimetres. You might as well be dealing in stocks and shares. (Predictably, games of opulence are played around big stones; and

¹⁴ Obert Clark Tanner became professor of philosophy at the University of Utah. His career as a manufacturer began when he was a student. He set up a workshop in his mother's basement and there made high school class rings and graduation pins. The focus of this enterprise — now the largest of its kind in North America — later moved to the design and manufacture of jewellery of another kind: that used to recognise and reward loyal service in industry: O. C. Tanner, *Commitment to Beauty* (Newcomen Society in North America, 1982).

¹⁵ As always, there are exceptions. The unusual pink diamonds from the Argyle mine in Western Australia have recently been retailing in London for twenty times the cost of their equivalent in purest white.

¹⁶ Emeralds and sapphires are prized, in fact, for their imperfections, the emerald's "jardin" being the purchaser's best insurance that the stone is not synthetic: B. Zucker, *Gems and Jewels* (Thames and Hudson, 1984).

games beget games within games. Coco Chanel is said to have remarked that it didn't matter if they were real as long as they looked like junk.)¹⁷

But quite separate notions of value exist side by side with a stone's commercial value. Those of the mineralogist and gemmologist. Those of the historian, especially the historian of ornament and fashion. And those of the designer. In our household, the more committing judgements of commercial, aesthetic, and practical value begin with a gemmologist whose judgment we trust. He educates our eyes and, in the light of that education, sells us stones. Once acquired, these are brooded on —typically, at the kitchen table among the breakfast things. It is at this stage that thoughts are entertained of the crucial contact between gemstone and body. Also thoughts of the gemstone in relation to other embodiments of colour: the rose Alain Blanchard, for example, its petals mottled two shades of red. Ravishing, but only for a day, it glows each summer outside the kitchen window. Sketch follows sketch; and while a design is on the boil, the house feels distinctively alive. The translation of Bernadine's sketches into three dimensions occurs in a small room in the heart of London and is effected by a mounter of exceptional skill and sensibility. The training is long, but the technology has changed little in centuries.¹⁸

In jewellery there is typically a conflict of sorts between engineering and art, the finished piece its residue. Take a particular powder-blue sapphire. It happens to be a gemmological curiosity, in that it transmits light like a lens, dividing the scene beyond it into two, one bright apple green, the other bright orange. With the eyes of an engineer, you realise at once that in mounting this stone as a ring, a risk has been taken. A large, steep-sided sugar-loaf, the stone must experience a vice-like grip from the four

¹⁷ J. Stancliffe, "Costume and Fashion Jewellery of the Twentieth Century," *V&A Album* 4 (1985): 118. In design circles, "precious" remains a term of abuse.

¹⁸ There are regions of modern jewellery, however, which are insistently high tech: e.g., Friedrich Becker's "mobile" rings and bracelets.



PLATE 3. "The Mounter"

claws. But the engineer also requires elegance: just enough purchase to be definitive, not enough to be crude. In the event, the solution reached proved a fraction too elegant; and resort had to be made to the hole already drilled in the stone's base to take a platinum peg.

Although slimmer and more energetic, this ring owes much in style to Art Deco. Compare it with something more recent: a startling entity that unites an old Burma ruby with a carbonado: a polycrystalline form of diamond —reputedly the hardest substance in the universe and, rumour has it, extraterrestrial in origin. Of no commercial value as gems, carbonados are rarities of intense interest to others concerned with stones.¹⁹

How did this design take shape? In part as a solution to the problem of lashing so eccentric and so wholly unworkable an object securely to the ring's hoop. Partly indirectly, as a response to avant-garde fashion —in fact, to Irving Penn's photographs of garments by the Japanese designer Issey Miyake. And what has happened in the designer's mind between the first ring and the second? The conventional formulation is fiercely reductive. It says that she has simply moved from one "look" to another "look." But this will not quite do. For what she has actually done is move closer to a raw edge. Pieces of matter, born of a geological convulsion, come to represent psychological states born of the mind's convulsions.

When the designer succeeds, the psychic juices stir. A golden cormorant dries its wings on top of a rock: the rock a Roman emerald bead, originally mined in Cleopatra's Egypt beside the Red Sea, and later recovered from diggings in Iran during the nineteenth century. The mysteries of alchemy and transubstantiation seem close by. (Small wonder that in the seventh century

¹⁹ Bruton says of carbonados that they are "composed of diamond graphite, and amorphous carbon —diamond in various transitional stages, in fact." He also says that they are a "ceramic, being similar to a modern sintered aggregate like diamond powder and metal": E. Bruton, *Diamonds* (NAG Press, 1981), p. 395.

three Paris jewellers —Eloi, Alban de Fleury, and Theau —were canonized.) At the centre of such feats lie stones like this antique ruby from Thailand; in some lights mistakable —I speak as a life-long and convinced atheist —for the human heart or soul.

Such a ruby can be set in a ring that is a piece of miniature sculpture in its own right; a ring that is respectful of the stone's age and idiosyncrasies, yet that heightens its aesthetic attack. We judge objects we care about as we judge one another: not solely in terms of what they are, but of the imaginative vistas they open and sustain. And, as Malraux realised, our knowledge of such objects is nowadays inseparable from photographs of them. A memorable piece of jewellery carries with it the potential for "piercing" photographs rather as a child carries around with it a gift for playing the violin.

What have I been saying? Photography, portrait painting, jewellery: in each, the boundary, normally so resilient, with which we protect ourselves from the more intense and unruly of our own emotions *can* be punctured.²⁰ The rewards of art become available to us in as much as "conversations" ensue. The gratifications of the visual world are emergent properties of such exchanges; muted, perhaps, for many, but ungovernably intense for the vulnerable few.²¹

Historically speaking, the intensity of this response to objects and to objects-as-people seems to have predated the equivalent re-

²⁰ In the best book yet written about still photography from the vantage point of the spectator, Roland Barthes distinguishes between *studium* —all the civilised and appreciative looking we do —and *punctum* —the detail that leaps out and pierces us: R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (Flamingo, 1984). *Punctum*, as Barthes presents it, is inseparable from thoughts of impermanence and loss.

²¹ How do we grasp what is going on in those parts of our experience that lie on a boundary's far side? The pertinent capacity must, I think, be that of empathy. The relevant theorising has its roots in nineteenth-century German aesthetics. First published in 1908, Wilhelm Worringer's *Abstraction and Empathy* is a characteristic product of this vein. It proposes a model of the aesthetic response in which the impulses of empathy and abstraction are counterposed.

sponse to people of flesh and blood. Among the more conspicuous of our leaps as a species, separated from the Neanderthal by the evolutionary equivalent of an eye blink, was the triumph of naturalistic form in Classical Greek sculpture. This achievement pre-dates by more than two millennia the development of a culture of sophisticated psychological reflection. Praxiteles fashioned the Cnidian Venus in or around 350 B.C. Freud was not to write *The Interpretation of Dreams* for a further 2,250 years.

It is in the context of such responses that the visual arts are laboratories; not just of schools or styles but of psychological truths and values.²² As you look, your eye is *doubly* educated. Not only do you discover for yourself why certain things are treasured: the difference, say, between a fine and a mediocre ruby. You also advance conceptually.

The work of the laboratories shows that, as you gaze, one set of action-guiding sentiments gains ascendancy over other sets: gusto, say, over anxiety and misgiving.²³

It illuminates the fastidiousness of the judgements we each make, continually and as a matter of course.

²² This train of thought began with Michel Butor. He treats the novel as the “phenomenological realm par excellence, the best possible place to study how reality appears to us, or might appear”: M. Butor, “The Novel as Research,” in *The Novel Today*, ed. M. Bradbury (Fontana, 1977), p. 49.

²³ The phrase “action-guiding sentiments” is chosen to align this part of my argument with the pragmatic tradition of David Hume, Charles Sanders Peirce, and Richard Rorty, which denies morality a basis in cold reason. However, moral distinctions — e.g., that between motives that are disinterested as opposed to self-serving or sordid — cannot sensibly be explained away in terms of psychodynamics or aesthetics. The topic demands a new venue of the kind that can be produced only by members of more than one discipline, each abrading the other. I am made uneasy, for instance, by Rorty’s claim that Jacques Derrida is a “sentimental educator”: R. Rorty, “Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality,” in *On Human Rights*, ed. S. Shute and S. Hurley (Basic Books, 1993). This seems only half an argument (with the trickier half missing). Degas, Matisse, even the sinister Bellmer? — yes, by all means. But Derrida? — scarcely. The forms of analysis he advocates show themselves in practice to be either arbitrarily subversive, and as likely to yield harsh outcomes as kindly ones; or political, in that they reduce all arguments to arguments about power. In an endnote, Rorty concedes that “‘deconstruction’ is of no political use.” With that, I agree.

And it emphasises the formality of the devices —that of reflection, for example —one which imaginative activity depends. (It is through the looking glass that Lewis Carroll's Alice steps from world to world.)²⁴

As the Oxford philosopher R. G. Collingwood said, "Art is not indifferent to the truth; it is essentially the pursuit of truth."²⁵ The truths in question are discoveries internal to our own systems of thought. They are of the kind we recognise when we cease to deceive ourselves; or when a penny unexpectedly drops. I see no harm in recognising such discoveries for what they are: statements of fact about matters of fact. There is a strong family resemblance, after all, in the following assertions:

"I had been blind to Veronese's ceiling paintings, but (like poor John Ruskin) was suddenly seized by their magnificent animality."

"I thought I was happy with *X* but, all along, I was really in love with *Y*."

"I thought I was depressed but, all along, I was really suffering from atrial fibrillation."

"I saw those finches as God's creation, but now recognise them as the products of natural selection."

While as disciplines psychology and the visual arts are at first sight wholly dissimilar, not only in terms of what they are like to pursue but in terms of the cultures that spring up around them, the analogies between them are in certain respects teasingly close.

²⁴ B. Goldberg, *The Mirror and Man* (University Press of Virginia, 1985).

²⁵ R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 288. David Bromwich points out that a number of modern philosophers — Michael Oakeshott and Richard Rorty as well as Collingwood — have come to think of inquiry in the humanities on the analogy of conversation: D. Bromwich, *Politics by Other Means* (Yale University Press, 1992), p. 131. My suggestion is that this analogy has its application in the arts and sciences too.

Both harbour “conversations”; argumentative to-ings and fro-ings. In art, the “conversation” is that between *inspiration* and the *medium* — the medium’s constraints no less than its opportunities. In psychology, it is between *insight and evidence*. In presenting psychology and the visual arts to you side by side, I have covertly been directing your attention —and, of course, my own —to the parallel between one “conversation” and the other. In doing this, I have sought to air the possibility that both “conversations” are what they have always seemed to be: tests of moral courage as well as tests of acumen. The scrutiny of awkward evidence may be among the most morally exacting tasks a professional psychologist ever undertakes.²⁶

As the word’s etymology hints, the parallels between the “conversations” of the arts, the human sciences, and the bedchamber are more deeply etched than you might at first imagine. Whether in front of an easel, at our desks, or behind closed curtains, the defining attributes of successful “conversations” seem to be the same:

there is always an element of perceived danger ;
no two “conversations,” are ever quite the same; and
each time, you learn something new

Like art and any sexual intimacy worth sustaining, evidence about a human life embodies a multiplicity of narratives, layered one on another. It harbours ambivalence and apparent contradiction, and may even shelter the occasional spectre. The knack of inquiry is to preserve the multiplicity, contain the ambivalences and contradictions, yet keep the mills of the imagination turning. Destructive of art, science, and intimacy alike are both the exercise

²⁶ The arguments tempting the psychologist to ignore discrepant evidence are many; and the professional sanctions for doing so are nil. Which journal, after all, encourages the use of samples that are “small enough”? —small enough to comprehend the interaction of variables as they take place in nature, not within samples, but within the lives of human beings considered one at a time.

of *le droit du seigneur* and also the manipulative wiles of the seducer, insistent that all issues of truth are illusory.

We know all this. We do not need to be told. Yet we are *hurt*, almost all of us, when new evidence is discrepant; and we are existentially threatened if someone points this out in print. Hardly any of us achieve what A. O. Hirschmann has recently called “Self-subversion”: the freedom to shift our ground when reality reveals itself in an unexpected light.” It is no disaster to have a hobbyhorse disappear from beneath you. On the contrary: it is a prior condition of getting somewhere worth getting that such disappearances should occur.²⁸

It is also a prior condition that, rather than gazing like tourists at the otherness we each carry within us, we sometimes look back from it toward the safe and known. “What is incomparable in this great solitary *oeuvre*,” Samuel Beckett once remarked of the Irish painter Jack Yeats’s work, “is its insistence upon sending us back to the darkest part of the spirit that created it and upon permitting illuminations only through that darkness.”²⁹ The separate but in some ways complementary roles of art and psychology, I have suggested, are to make these hidden properties of the life of the mind known.

²⁷ A. O. Hirschman, *A Propensity to Self-Subversion* (Harvard University Press, 1995). In fact, there are few pleasures less alloyed than the discovery that a recalcitrant body of evidence fits neatly into place within a new conceptual scheme: the discovery, for example, that a weak discrimination between convergers and divergers becomes crisp when it is realised that divergers typically give mildly violent responses to the Uses of Objects Test, while convergers give responses that are either nonviolent or very violent: L. Hudson, *Contrary Imaginations* (Methuen, 1966), p. 72.

²⁸ “Dada” is a translation of “hobbyhorse.” The artists of the Dada movement are said to have snatched the word at random from a dictionary; a curious mischance. Their subversive and at times nihilistic intentions were only too easily translated —as were theories of the Freudian unconscious —into what Malcolm Bowie has called “an ordinary counter within an ordinary conceptual game”: M. Bowie, “Jacques Lacan,” in *Structuralism and Since*, ed. J. Sturrock (Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 119.

²⁹ S. Beckett, “Homage to Jack B. Yeats,” in *The Art of Jack B. Yeats* by T. G. Rosenthal (Deutsch, 1993). Jack, son of a portrait painter and younger brother of William Butler Yeats, was also much admired by Oskar Kokoschka.

Let me end with an undisguisedly personal anecdote, and with that anecdote's implications. As a research student in Cambridge, I was locked within the world of falsely dispassionate prose: sentences of the form "It will be seen that the above tables are not without significance." My research was timid, my doctoral thesis a desert. Then, one day, it became clear that a first marriage, imprudently contracted, had ended; and that a second, altogether more satisfactory, was taking shape. I sat down and found I could write: not especially well — a dogged dyslexia sees to that — but with a freedom that has never entirely forsaken me.³⁰ I had stepped across a boundary I did not know was there; and had been free to step across it because my intimate life had moved from one configuration to another.

It will be seen that the above-mentioned anecdote is not without its theoretical implications. Two particularly. The first is that the cerebral and the intimately personal interdepend. To alter the tenor of events at one boundary may be to alter it at several, and to do so according to ascertainable rules. The second concerns the orthodox psychology department as an instrument of thought control. Long ago, two ghostly presences wrestled for Psychology's soul; ghostly because we are dealing here in floor-shows and shadow shows, not demonstrable substance. The Appearance-of-Pertinence wrestled with the Appearance-of-Rigour. And lost. For a psychologist to study identifiable human beings in the full possession of their powers came to be seen, consequently, as a betrayal of the discipline's identity and collective sense of mission.³¹

³⁰ What I wrote were the first two-thirds of a jaunty article in which Darwin and Einstein offer themselves as candidates for postgraduate research grants: "Academic Sheep and Research Goats," *New Society* 108 (1964): 9. The article's pedestrian conclusion was added later. Where — in trivial instances like this, or the more momentous — were the pertinent sentences before they reached the page? Where were the *Sonnets to Orpheus* before they flowed from Rilke's pen like celestial dictation: in all, 1,230 lines of finished verse written in nineteen days by a man previously in the grip of depression?

³¹ Although he is often dismissed as a windbag, Herbert Marcuse's twin notions of "repressive sublimation" and "repressive desublimation" do encapsulate the two-

I remember with dismay the virulence of the attack launched within psychology by the scientific on the supposedly humane; the contempt, particularly, of two very clever men, one of whom had made a specialised study of the octopus, and the other of whom had made a specialised study of the ant. But I also remember the virulence of the prejudices with which those pioneers of psychology-as-a-science were beset. I went from Oxford to Cambridge to do my graduate work in the late 1950s and soon after arrival was placed next to the master of my new college at dinner — a historian, much loved by his students. What was the subject matter of my research? he asked. I said that I was interested in intelligence tests. “Huh,” he replied. “Devices invented by Jews for the advancement of Jews.” I supposed, as sometimes happens at moments of embarrassment, that I had misheard him; that some nightmare irruption had occurred inside my own head. But no. He repeated himself twice; and what he said was what he meant. Scientifically inclined psychologists, fashionable homosexuals, Jews: all were part of the alien herd then massing at Civilisation’s gate.³²

Things could get worse before they get better. But I am an optimist, and I think I see the force of the prejudices at play in and around psychology beginning to soften. A new generation of psychologists may yet shrug off their physics envy and wriggle free. This new generation will see the mind as a system within which discoveries are made, and seemingly magical releases of energy

fisted nature of the orthodox psychology department’s system of control: H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964). Pure research is endorsed and the study of people’s lives is stigmatised as the preserve of the second-rate. Should some individuals nonetheless rebel, the department has a second line of defence. Its culture provides politically correct conduits along which the rebels’ energies can harmlessly be flushed from view.

³² L. Hudson, *The Cult of the Fact* (Cape, 1972). Edward Welbourne is described with more sympathy than he deserves in R. D. Gray, “A Past Master, 1894-1966,” *Emmanuel College Magazine* (1996). “It still happens,” Gray records, “when Gatherings of Members who knew him as Senior Tutor or as Master take place, that the after-dinner speaker who mentions his name is greeted with storms of applause and foot-stamping.”

occur. They will be expert, too, in what happens when minds meet: when everyday intimacies and working collaborations form. They will also think with subtlety about the ethical conundrums such discoveries and releases, intimacies and collaborations, pose. Degas once said that a painting was a conjuring trick, even a falsehood; an accomplishment that called for as much “cunning, trickery and vice as the perpetration of a crime.”³³ This “criminal” propensity often seems rooted in quirks and abnormalities: in Degas’s case, in an attitude to women that combined fascination with fear. Yet his nudes were among the first — perhaps they were the *very* first — to present the female body not as a vehicle for extraneous religious or erotic sentiments, but as an entity in its own right. Such complexities are by no means restricted to the visual arts. Honoré Balzac was described by a friend as a “human encyclopaedia”: “He did not want any fact taken by itself; for him it was part of another fact; and that fact part of a thousand more.” Yet, away from his writing table, he was a “human untruth”; a man who lied seamlessly and as a matter of course.³⁴

But, above all, I see the new generation as conceptually *lissom*: alert to the negating shadow each affirmative “conversation” creates — the darkneses and absences on which that “conversation” depends for its persuasive force. If I have been pursued in the course of these consistently affirmative lectures, it is by the shade of Georges Braque. In front of Braque’s remarkable late works, you identify everyday shapes: a bird here, a billiard table

³³ I. Dunlop, *Degas* (Thames and Hudson, 1979), p. 133. Valéry (*Degas, Manet and Morisot*, p. 55) describes Degas’s brilliantly lifelike but plainly misogynous imitation of a woman settling herself in a tram-seat.

³⁴ V. S. Pritchett, *Balzac* (Hogarth, 1992), p. 136 and p. 149. Implicit in such examples is a theory of originality. A match is made between hidden facets of the individual’s nature and the as yet unrealised constraints and opportunities of an evolving medium; and a partitioning occurs. Usable (although sometimes incipiently perverse) elements are geared to the task in hand, while the unmanageably disruptive are either repressed or transformed into quirks and aberrations. The partitioning boundary remains permeable, however; and seepage of the unmanageable occurs — sometimes influencing the content of the individual’s work, sometimes the ground-rules of the genre within which that work is set.

there. But as you look these shapes dissolve. The key to these extraordinary images is their activation of gaps, their emptinesses. More than that, it is the visual allure of those absences as they gather you in.³⁵ It is as if the last trump has sounded and you have been caught —as we are all bound to be caught —unprepared. It seems fitting that this master of visual paradox should have designed distinctive and memorable jewellery; and that, toward the end of his life, he should have illustrated the texts of Heraclitus.

What airy nonsense, a sceptical voice exclaims! The fellow has found himself talking after all these years about boundaries and conversations, affirmations and shadows, for reasons which are transparently autobiographical. Hasn't he heard of Habermas? Evidence is inseparable from the interests of those who collect and use it. And haven't we all heard of psychologists who carve out careers for themselves by turning their personal shortcomings and eccentricities into the subject matter of their research? —the childless who become gurus on childraising, the experts on social interaction who can't look you in the eye.³⁶

I may well have spoken as I have for autobiographical reasons, a more sanguine voice says in reply. Gone are the old certainties and detachments. As Clifford Geertz points out, "it has become harder and harder to separate what comes into science from the side of the investigator from what comes into it from the

³⁵ J. Golding, S. Bowness, and I. Monod-Fontaine, *Braque: The Late Works* (Yale University Press, 1997). "I've painted, in high light, with colors of / Shadows cast by the dark itself, in love / With shows of blackness. May I play with light / When covering darkness fits me like a glove": J. Hollander, *Tesserae and Other Poems* (Knopf, 1995), p. 85.

³⁶ Anne Roe saw this more than forty years ago. Some of the distinguished psychologists and social scientists she studied were individuals who still harboured "resentment and rebellion" toward their parents, even though they had achieved outward independence. She also noted that they saw themselves as set apart from ordinary people and as in some vital respect superior to them: A. Roe, "A Psychological Study of Eminent Psychologists and Anthropologists and a Comparison with Biological and Physical Scientists," *Psychological Monographs* 67 (1953).

side of the investigated.”³⁷ But there could be strength in that. It makes sense, if you are a psychologist, to reflect on your own experience. When you collect evidence in that reflection’s light, certain readings are going to sit more comfortably on it than others —as they do on a poem or on the fossil record. The sleuth’s essential skill is to allow that evidence to answer back. Why else would Paul Valéry have observed that “our most important ideas are those that contradict our feelings”?³⁸

Unresolved and perhaps unresolvable, such exchanges are internal to each of us. It is on their vigour, I intuit, that the discipline’s future is going to depend.

³⁷ C. Geertz *After the Fact* (Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 135.

³⁸ Quoted in Hirschman, *A Propensity to Self-subversion*, p. 59.