

Lost and Found —A Five Year Old's Struggle to Find a Home: An Exploration of Inner Space and Dimensionality Through Meltzer's Key Concept of the Claustrium

A paper dedicated to the life and work of psychoanalyst James V. Fisher (1937-2012)

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Beneath him with new wonder now he views
To all delight of human sense expos'd
In narrow room Natures whole wealth, yea more,
A Heav'n on Earth.
(Milton, 1674/2007)

Abstract

This paper will highlight Meltzer's seminal concept of *the claustrium*, an unconscious phantasy of space inside the body of the internal mother that has been broken into and occupied. The function of such a phantasy of invasion into the internal mother is usually defensive in nature, where infantile anxiety has not been assuaged by adequate means of containment. The infantile part in seeking to avoid anxieties of annihilation and abandonment, in phantasy forcibly enters the internal maternal object residing there in search of relief. The price of seeking out such relief from vulnerability and helplessness is entrapment with lies, deceit, cruelty, and fraudulence as bedfellows. Meltzer pointed to the difficult struggle in escaping such fraudulent ways of being, to be able to acknowledge the goodness of the creative couple and the bearing of depressive pain. The claustrium is therefore a claustrophobic enclave. The setting is the inside of a maternal object that is made up of separate compartments, each filled with its own geographical features and qualities. This paper will draw upon intensive

Slater, P. (2016). Lost and found —a five year old's struggle to find a home: an exploration of inner space and dimensionality through Meltzer's key concept of the claustrium. *Ata: Journal of Psychotherapy Aotearoa New Zealand*, 20(2), 161-182. DOI:10.9791/ajpanz.2016.15 © New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists Inc.

psychoanalytic psychotherapy with a five-year-old adopted child to illustrate the quality of existence within the claustrum and the child's struggle to find an internal home.

Waitara

Ko tā tēnei tuinga he aronui i te ariā tairangi a Merete, arā Meltzer, mō te mokoā, he mariko maurimoengā mokoā i roto o te tinana o te hinengaro whaea kua wāhia kua whetaia. Ko te tikanga o te mariko pērā ki te hinengaro whaea, i te nuinga o te wā, he momo whakatumatuma mēnā kāre i mau pai te whakamāoriori taiohi. Ko te wāhanga ki te taiohi i a ia e whai ana ki te karo manawa pā ā-kore, ā-whakarerehanga i rō mariko ka houa te rawa hinengaro whaea kei reira nei e noho ana ki te kimi taumatua. Ko te utu o te rapu whakamāmātanga o te pēhitanga me te paraheaheahanga he whakamau ki te kōrero parau, ki te mahi whakawiriwiri me te whānako hai hoa moetahi. I tohua ake e Merete te uauatanga o te whawhai ki te māwhiti i ēnei momo mahi, o te kaha ki te whakaae ki te pai o te tokorua mariko me te pupuri mamae pēhitanga. Nōreira, he wāhi whakatinā te mokoā nei. Ko te tūnga, ko roto o tētahi rawa morimori i hangaia mai i ētahi tūāporo whakakāia ki ōna ake matawhenua, kōunga hoki. Ka huri tēnei pepa ki te tātarihanga whaiora hinengaro o tētahi tama tāne whāngai tokorima ngā tau hai whakaahua i te kōunga o te mauri kei roto i te mokoā me te karawheta a te tamaiti ki te kimi kāinga hinengaro.

Keywords: Meltzer; claustrum; intrusive projective identification; object

On a remote part of the Kent coastline, a spit of land runs straight as far as the eye can see. With shingle beach and sea on one side, and narrow gauge railway line on the other, a boundary is formed, in the middle of which stands a motley but curious crop of wooden shacks, old fishermen's cottages. Prospect Cottage is one such shack, but with a difference, it had been well maintained and its garden in particular caught the eye. It was here that a vast array of flotsam and jetsam had been found, gathered, and placed into intricate patterns, shapes, and features. Perhaps like most people who visit I was left giving narrative to these objects, wondering how they had been given up to the sea and the nature of their journey to this remote part of the world. The garden is a compelling feature, it is hard to tear the eye away from the varied collection of objects. This indelible mark left on the mind perhaps resonated with some primitive emotional states of loss, separation, and nowhere-ness. Conversely, there was something reassuring about how a sense of family, and connective-ness had been given to the bottles, wheels, oil drums, dismembered dolls, boots and shoes, rusted metal chains, and anchors. Intriguingly, a complex relationship seemed to exist between the objects, that appeared at odds with the coastal shrubs, sand, and stones of the natural environment, but strangely, they also seemed to be more at home here than anywhere else.

The Work of Donald Meltzer

Donald Meltzer's contributions to psychoanalytic theory and practice have been considerable. He placed great emphasis upon developing a psychoanalytic process which

promoted the patient's insight into the differences between infantile and adult modes of experience, and between internal and external realities. The modification of anxiety, as with Bion (1967), was a further area of interest to Meltzer, especially in terms of psychoanalytic psychotherapy's emphasis upon the growth of introjective identification. Meltzer was keen to illustrate links between family and community, links that reverberated throughout his work, as did his theory of the geography of the mind. An interest in autistic states, and the use of internal and external spaces meshed with his exploration of the many cultural aspects of life, in which he took such a strong interest. Rustin commented:

The different types of mental space are the building blocks in Meltzer's conception of the geography of the mind. The term geography brings to mind both the physical spaces of our external world and the ways in which man lives within this, his cultivation of and assaults on nature, the human geography of cities, travel, war and conflict and the geography of the natural world we and other living creatures inhabit. This proved an apt description for the inner world. (2016, p. 5)

Meltzer (1992) added imaginative insight gained from clinical material as to the quality of the internal environment and how different areas of the internal body can be told apart. He developed the idea that intrusive phantasies can lead to confusion-al states between what is internal and external, and between what is self and what is object. Meltzer saw this as inherently involving dimensionality, that in autistic states, for example, the quality of the relationship and interaction between the inner and outer world is often one-dimensional, lacking a more two-dimensional relationship. It is the formation of such two-dimensional relationships that provide knowledge of one's own internal space, then allowing for transitions and the crossing of thresholds into other spaces without losing oneself in the process. Rhode (2008) described this developmental achievement as providing us with a sense of home, of belonging within the human family. In addition to work with children with autism, this phenomena has resonance when working with children who have been fostered or adopted, and who have had early experiences of trauma or environmental failure.

Placing emphasis upon the different qualities of projective identification, Meltzer (1992) differentiated between projective identification that is communicative and that which is intrusive. In the former, the person acting as a container of the disturbing projections can bear them while still being able to think about the experience, whereas in the latter, retaining a capacity to think is more difficult. Intrusive identification is therefore central to the understanding of claustrophobic anxieties.

Meltzer's work offers a developmental understanding of the emergence and recognition of inner space.

Life in the Claustrium

Meltzer (1992) viewed the concept of the claustrium as an unconscious phantasy of the inside of the internal mother, that is heavily and forcibly intruded into and which is then occupied. The result is a claustrophobic phenomena which Sorensen (2016) viewed as being on a

continuum, from the relatively ordinary to the severely pathological and anti-developmental.

In his thinking of the claustrum, Meltzer (1992) was clearly developing Klein's (1946/1975) earlier thinking of projective identification, in that this phantasy space is inside the internal mother and is therefore at the epicentre of all mental experience. He described the interior of this inside space as having three imagined compartments: the head/breast, the genital, and the rectum. Meltzer wished to stress the forceful entry into such compartments, either by stealth, lies or trickery for which he used the term intrusive projective identification.

The aim of this claustral phantasy is a defensive one; when infantile anxiety has, for whatever reason, been uncontained and unprocessed, the overburdened, infantile part of the personality seeks desperate solace, and in phantasy pushes into the impervious, internal, maternal object. Crucially, the taking up of possession of this space is undertaken in order to find temporary respite from fear of abandonment and annihilation. Meltzer (1992) believed that this forced entry comes at the cost of long-term imprisonment in the compartment where lies, fraudulence, and cruelty become the common currency. Enslavement or addiction serves the function of temporarily obliterating awareness of helplessness and vulnerability. It becomes hard to leave this claustrophobic world as the lies and fraudulence become the basis of a more acceptable version of the self.

Meltzer (1992) epitomised this claustrophobic enclave as a life space, an inner world with its own geographical features, qualities, and atmosphere, which is lived through the intruder's unconscious mind. He made the emotional descriptions of these internal dwelling places highly recognisable, because they are based upon qualities belonging to the external world, which are taken in and then re-externalised. Here, he was describing a process of *commerce*, that is the constant delivery of experience back and forth from outer to inner world.

Pamela Sorenson (2016) described this concept of the claustrum as being ubiquitous, but that we are usually relieved of it by the vitality of real relationships which allow us to feel grateful for being alive, notwithstanding the agonies of inevitable loss. "But when despair extinguishes the possibility of intimacy and sincerity the non-life inside the compartments of the claustrum takes hold" (2016, p. 46).

The Geography Of The Three Compartments

The mind/ breast compartment

When viewed from the outside by the infantile part of the personality that is able to bear separateness, the mind/breast compartment stores the qualities that inspire love and gratitude, as well as hate and envy. However, when viewed from the inside as an intruder, such qualities as beauty, knowledge, wisdom, and compassion are heavily distorted in order to avoid the painful feelings of separateness. The qualities are thus turned into arrogance, ostentation, and self-serving indulgence. Through the mechanism of intrusive projective identification, cynicism, elitism, and contempt paper over the dreadful loneliness that is being defended against. Sorenson suggested that:

Fraudulence pervades all aspects of life in the claustrum of the head/breast. There

is therefore an absence of meaning which is attained through genuine struggle. The personality walks the tightrope of pseudo maturity, threatened at any moment by the fall into infantile anxiety. (2016, p. 47)

The genital compartment

When this phantasised space is viewed by the intruder, it is an orgiastic place where masturbatory activity prevails over a more creative experience. It is where perverse pleasure is incited and the generational divide is obscured and often annihilated. Mystery and creativity are instead replaced by fear of betrayal, disloyalty, and lack of trust.

The rectal compartment

For the intruder who forcefully enters the rectal compartment, it is where tyranny prevails and the order of the day is survival. Here there is an omnipresent danger of being found out as an imposter, a gatecrasher, the penalty for which is being thrown out into a world of perpetual loneliness. The rectal compartment is the place of degradation of both behaviour and mental functioning. Meltzer (1992) described it as a place containing no justice, only rank, no truth, only manipulation, no trust, only obedience. It is the world of the concentration camp, where survival is all that matters.

Meltzer (1992) made a key point when describing the characteristics of the emotional geography of these compartments that make up the claustrum. He stated that inhabiting this world means not living in meaningful relationships, but existing in a world of transactions. It is a world where separateness and a sense of the other has been annihilated, along with a sense of mystery, of not knowing, and of curiosity about the other. Importantly, we are all afflicted by such states of mind, filled with loneliness and anguish, and we all need others to help us emerge from such places.

The omnipotent inside knowledge of the internal mother gained from intrusive entry and access becomes a model for relating in all key relationships. It is the pernicious way in which inside information or insider trading is gleaned. In the claustrum, it is living via intrusive identification. James Fisher (1999) explained:

When the part of the personality ensconced in the claustrum gains control of consciousness, marked changes occur (Meltzer)...the experience of the outside world becomes dominated by the claustrophobic atmosphere, meaning that the person feels trapped in whatever situation he finds himself. Job, marriage, holiday, on trains, buses or lifts, in personal or casual relationships, in restaurants or theatres, in every area there is a tangible atmosphere of catastrophe immanent and with little chance of exit (p.73).

Case Study

For the child in State “care” or the child who has been adopted, the experience might be compared with the struggle of the refugee who has been discarded or forced to flee the homeland because of persecution, abuse or violence. Through the lens of three times weekly psychoanalytic psychotherapy, this presentation will provide insight into the struggle of a

five year old to find a sense of home through emergence from her residence in the inside space of the claustrum.

Background

Holly and her twin sister Susan were both referred to the clinic at which I worked by their adoptive parents when the girls were aged four. The referral cited the girls' behaviour as being extremely challenging and demanding, with both parents stressing their concerns about managing their twins' emotional needs. The family had moved prior to the referral and although the girls' previous nursery had provided an encouraging report about their progress, there were some serious concerns, particularly about Holly's oppositional behaviour, as well as her need to "control and manipulate others".

Adoptive parents Jodie and James were professionally successful. Both were so keen for the girls to have psychoanalytic psychotherapy that their choice to move home was partly in order to be near my clinic.

Initially, Holly's sister Susan was thought to be the main cause for concern. Parents and school described her behaviour as boisterous and flirtatious, and that she was liable to lapses in concentration. She had angry and destructive outbursts, all of which contrasted to Holly's withdrawn, quiet presentation. Jodie had been concerned about what she called Holly's "poor level of attachment" to her adoptive parents. Her ways of relating to her adoptive parents appeared to reflect a complex and emotionally unsettled picture of her early experiences, and a struggle to orientate herself. This suggested an absence of what Tustin (1981) described as "rootedness".

The twins were born 11 weeks premature, spending the first six weeks of their lives in a neonatal intensive care unit. Mendelsohn argued that "most premature babies are traumatised and that their behaviours may be misinterpreted or avoided by those carers who in a bewildered and shocked state of mind, are unable to reach out to their baby or attend emotionally to his needs" (2005, p. 196).

When this sudden entry into the world is considered, alongside the twins' biological parents' own histories of being brought up in the care system, of severe drug dependency issues, and their birth mother's diagnosis of "drug induced schizophrenia", we see what difficulties the girls would have had in accessing minds that could hold onto their emotional needs.

As babies, Holly and Susan were discharged from hospital straight into foster care. A number of attempts were made to reunite the girls with their birth parents until finally they were adopted by James and Jodie, at the age of 21 months.

This uncertain and precarious beginning to the lives of Holly and her sister was, according to reports, punctuated by neglect, a high level of deprivation, and possibly abuse. The profound impact of such deleterious early experiences on a fledgling personality brings back to mind Meltzer's (1967) emphasis on the function of extensive projective identification. He viewed such considerable drawing upon projective identification as being in the service of "*counteracting any configuration that produces psychic pain at infantile levels*" (p. 23), and thereby as a developmental mechanism that should lessen over time. Meltzer emphasised the need during this process for the formation of a "*toilet breast relationship*" (p. 23), whereby the infant is able to draw upon an object (a part object) with a capacity to receive noxious

evacuations. Ever keen to stress the important synergy and oscillatory aspects of the internal and external world Meltzer wrote:

The unavailability of an object in the outside world capable of containing psychic pain throws the ego back on massive projective identification with an internal object: if this fails to control anxiety, states of schizophrenia withdrawal into delusional or autistic fragmentation appear to be the only recourse. (1967, p. 23)

First Glimpses

When I first met Holly, I saw an attractive, waif-like child, with deeply set, imploring eyes, and unkempt hair which seemed to have a life of its own. Holly was reluctant to explore the toy box in the room let alone play in this first assessment session, confining herself instead to the safety of mum's lap, who she insisted remained present. Eventually leaving mum's lap, she ventured towards the toy box. In the exploratory play that followed, I was immediately struck by Holly's heightened sensitivity to other children who might have used the room or the materials. This rivalry with other children appeared to have its focus very much on her twin sister Susan as the following vignette demonstrates:

I pointed out the toy box on the table after initially explaining which chair I would be sitting in. Holly described my chair as "a big chair" as she wandered, rather aimlessly over to the table on which stood her box. She struggled momentarily, with the lid before carefully dipping a hand inside. Holly turned to me and suddenly explained: "I'm here today with mummy, and Susan is at home with daddy. She will be having her lunch now you know." She looked at me smiling, adding: "It's my turn to be here now." I agreed that now it was her time to be here, but that she was very interested in the different things she and her sister were doing today.

The fact of Holly being a twin became a central theme in the material, especially as Susan was also undergoing her own intensive therapy. The findings of Piontelli's (1989) study of twins before and after birth is particularly pertinent, as she suggested that a pattern of relating between twins is clearly established early in their inter-uterine life together.

During this assessment process I had a strong experience of Holly being a child who lacked an internal sense of emotional security, who was finding it difficult to find a place of her own in the world. Finding such a place of internal security was clearly dependent upon how Holly had experienced and taken in the world out there. This was evident in the final assessment session when she insisted again that her mother remain present. This session left her uncertain as to whether she would come back and perhaps stirred up feelings of rejection and loss. The sense evoked in the session was of a goodbye, precipitating a strong need to cling and take possession of mummy out of a very real fear of separation and of being left behind.

Holly's needs dominated this session as her mother and I found it difficult to say "no" to her. At one point she had us both following her to see her grandmother who was waiting in reception. Once back in the therapy room, Holly immediately commandeered mother's lap and busied herself playing with the cross and chain that dangled from mum's neck.

Eventually she persuaded mum to take the cross from around her neck, this after she had whispered a number of questions in mum's ear. Holly took the cross off the chain and began to examine it, turning it over in her fingers, looking so closely at it as if there was a wish to get inside it. Once again she leant toward her mother and whispered something into her ear. Mother wondered with Holly if she would like to address her question to me also. Holly glanced around at me and smiled rather triumphantly. I recalled the powerful child-like nature of feeling left out. Holly was letting me know something of what it's like being the one on the outside, the one to be left out of the whispered secret.

In this instance, I was left with the powerful feeling of being quite helpless and ineffectual. Holly was immediately giving me an illustration of her need to have sole possession of her object. This brought to mind Meltzer's (1992) thinking on the quality of relating within the claustrum, in which transactions with the object are often secretive, fraudulent, and cruel. Perhaps for Holly this forceful projection of unwanted emotional experience into myself was a communication of her early unmet needs. Anne Alvarez (2000) suggested that for severely deprived children these needs often represent a need for protection, for preservation, for a sense of agency and potency, as well as a strong need for revenge and justice.

Towards the latter part of this final assessment session Holly took a toy telephone from the toy box and placed it on top of her mother's head. Feverishly, she began pressing all the buttons on the face of the phone. This appeared to be an early expression of Holly's intrusive means of trying to get inside her object. She was the one pressing all the buttons, but perhaps beyond this there was a wish for mother and me to stay in touch, and for her not to fall out of our minds.

Strikingly, Holly's strong communication about her need for help with separations was in sharp contrast to the enforced, unprocessed separations during her very early life. The quality of Holly's projective identification was immediately evident, and I began to experience it as a very effective means of getting inside her object in order for her to take possession of it, thereby avoiding unbearable feelings of separation from it. It served to rid her of such unwanted feelings and experience, but projective identification, as we know, also serves the therapist in terms of providing important insight into the internal landscape and the quality of object relations.

Perhaps Holly was always going to experience the possibility and the terror of being the one left or pushed out. In this final assessment session, it was myself as the paternal object that appeared to be the outsider. I was to become familiar with the feelings of being de-skilled and impotent in enforcing boundaries; feelings which seemed to increase Holly's own sense of omnipotence.

Falling from the mind

The experience of being with Holly in these initial phases of the work was difficult. Given that her work entailed thrice-weekly psychotherapy, I was immediately struck by the difficulty she had in keeping thoughts, feelings, and experiences safely housed in her mind. Continuity and the experience of "going on being" seemed largely absent as each time we met felt like a first meeting. There seemed to be huge empty spaces, which she might

irrevocably fall into. In the room she appeared lost, wandering aimlessly about, unsure of what to do and of how to use what was on offer there. A sense of play and playfulness was painfully absent. Holly appeared to be ill-prepared for the world she had entered so abruptly.

Initially the work appeared to evoke strong anxieties around separation and loss. The sense was that to get close to someone else would mean giving up and separating from what she already had. This was manifested in a considerable reluctance to leave mum or dad in the waiting room. On one occasion dad brought Holly into the room with her still desperately clinging to his leg pleading with him not to go, not to leave her. I reflected that there was a real worry that leaving dad would feel like leaving him forever. With dad sitting rather awkwardly in the corridor immediately outside the room, Holly slowly wandered over to the table and tentatively picked up pieces of furniture out of a plastic container. These were part of a small wooden play-house. The difficulty of her standing on her own two feet was palpable, as was the need to adhesively stick to her object. In these sessions I observed that there was little attempt to formulate a process of play, which for example, might lead to the house being furnished, as one would ordinarily expect in the play of a child. Instead, Holly's attention was taken by one or two blocks of furniture that were marked and slightly broken:

She examined a table that was slightly damaged and another block that had a sticky mark on the side of it. Her face visibly grimaced as she put these to one side adding, "I don't like that, it's not nice." I reflected that it was not nice to be given something that was second-hand and had been used by others.

Besides my feelings of guilt about providing these broken and soiled materials, and an overwhelming feeling that what I was offering her was not good enough, I also wondered if these toys had put her in touch with feelings of having being lost and found — a second-hand child to this new mummy and daddy. I believe it also attested to a sense of an internal object that was badly broken and damaged. It reflected how difficult Holly found it to furnish her mind, to turn a house into a home of her own.

It seemed that Holly's lack of an early *holding* relationship contributed to her inability to keep the object of her therapy and therapist alive in her own mind. I believe it also fuelled the thrust towards an intrusive form of identification with her object. This lack of an experience of being held in mind clearly became a template for the leaky minds of other people in her life, whom she feared would just as quickly evict her from their minds. The sense was of a child undrawn, unwanted and unloved; invisible almost. Bion (1967) and O'Shaughnessy (1964) explored what occurs to an object when it is absent, and how this has ramifications for the development and capacity for thinking and thinking about. O'Shaughnessy explained that the first experience of an absent object is the breast, when it is not there to provide satisfaction and fulfilment and instead becomes synonymous with hunger and emptiness — it is an absent object that becomes a bad one. O'Shaughnessy, like Bion, believed that, although constituting a difficulty for development, the absent object must also be a "spur for it", as the child must come to terms with absence and separateness. It is only when the frustration of this separateness, experienced as absence, becomes intolerable that hatred will be mobilised against this absent object, "making it hard to keep any good gained in its presence" (1964, p. 34).

An overwhelming need to evacuate the intolerable experience of separation meant that the only means Holly had of securing her object was to intrusively project herself inside it. The cost of inhabiting such a place meant that potential opportunities for developing a mind of her own that could think and retain, were largely unavailable to her. Perhaps this was partly explained by the early lack of an available mind that could be a thinker for her thoughts until she was able to think them for herself. (Bion, 1967).

A drawing Holly made of a family playing in the shallows of the sea seemed illustrative of some of her internal conflicts and the need for someone other than her to be pushed out of mind:

Holly pulled out pencils and paper from her box, waving the yellow pencil in front of my face with a smile. I said that yes here was her favourite colour, which she had told me about in the first session we had together. She nodded her head then drew a patch of blue on the paper which she said was the sea and then a line of yellow, which she explained was the beach. I wondered if the sea was rough or smooth, Holly replied that it was a "warm sea". She then drew a number of figures, two children in the sea with a smiling mummy and three on the sand playing happily. I said that this family seemed very happy together. She agreed that they were and that they were on holiday. I said that I was wondering where the daddy was, she said that he was busy at work.

This material from early on in the work hints at the problems Holly was facing in terms of the absence of an idea about a creative oedipal couple, and the adequacy and potency of a good object that could keep things alive in her mind.

Difficulties in making links and connections

As time passed Holly gradually felt less need to have her parents come into the therapy room with her, although she still checked on them from time to time, not only to see that they were still in the waiting room, but also to see what they could be doing without her. I was able to gently reflect with her on the leaky home of her mind, that would easily lose things and worry when they were not physically present. Such interpretations, and a growing understanding on my part of her infantile anxiety and subsequent need to obliterate any idea of separateness and otherness gradually enabled her to feel more at home in the room.

Holly's play for much of the early work could best be described as prosaic; it was repetitive and ritualistic. She found it difficult to externalise mental experience in a way which imbued toys and figures with symbolic representation. According to Hoxter, "A young child usually achieves such symbolic functioning by creating a three dimensional play situation into which he can put himself, or at least a toy representing himself" (1977, p. 132). There was little modulation in the activities, with little seeking out or establishing meaningful contact with me. The obligatory game of catch with a soft ball, played at the beginning of many sessions, was an example of play that was wrung dry of any vibrancy or meaningfulness after about 15 minutes. Similarly our game of hide and seek involved using the same hiding places over and over again. The quality of one dimensionality proliferated Holly's play as well as the

ability to be with another. Klein spoke of how a lack of symbol formation can impact on the relationship with reality. Phantasy and reality, ego and object, become conflated and confused by the quality of the projective identification.

I began to think about this as a communication by Holly of those kinds of impoverished mental experiences that so defined her early experience. An overwhelming sense of emptiness and deathliness pervaded the room at times. She was not only conveying to me something of her early experience with a mind that was largely absent, but was also expressing the loss of a vital and real part of herself that was lost inside her object. Bion (1967) also reminded us that the intense feelings of deprivation may be more acutely felt by the child when what is offered (in this case a mind that is present and wishes to think about her) is, in fact, something that was felt to be missing at an earlier stage.

I also wondered if she was anxious about damaging something or upsetting or angering me. I put into words her heightened worry about things being different or things changing; as if appearing out of her stuck place would mean having to have some relation to the reality of our separateness. Accompanying this were moments where I felt quite unable to think or make connection with aspects of the material in any meaningful way; she seemed so far away I could barely reach her. This is an experience that reaches inside my mind now, many years later, as I struggle to write this passage. My thoughts and my ability to connect ideas together eludes me. In hindsight, my muddled state of mind was an important clue as to the quality of her identification with her object, which was of an intrusive as opposed to a communicative kind.

I found myself reflecting with Holly about her own lack of curiosity, and my own inability at times to think about what was occurring between us. The atmosphere felt almost prison-like: cold, drab, stripped of life, unwelcoming and uninviting to thought or meaning making. As Meltzer (1992) called it, this was the inside place of the concentration camp, the place where one barely survives, and for me it was doing my time of 50 torturous minutes before being set free. Tragically, for Holly there was no escape from this internal dwelling place. Here we have insight into the geography of the rectal compartment of the claustrum, complete with its heavily oppressive atmosphere.

Holly's strong need to stick in my mind and for me to have the same thoughts, play the same games and do the same activities, appeared to be strong evidence of the difficulty she was having in distinguishing between self and other, strong feature of life inside the object. For me to have thoughts and ideas that were different from hers was particularly threatening to Holly, who seemed unable to make use of any thinking I offered her. My anxiety to see progress, to get things moving, and to point out any minor changes or differences in the quality of her presence in the room was my attempt to offer her an experience of a vitalising or enlivening object. Holly had perhaps never had a consistent experience of such an object, or was splitting off such healthier aspects of her-self and locating them out of reach. There was certainly a good deal of evidence to suggest that the quality of Holly's splitting and projection meant that useful parts of herself had been lost to her sister Susan and, in the therapeutic setting, to myself:

Holly took the drawing she had made of the family (interestingly a family of three made up of a mummy, daddy, and a little girl having a picnic at the seaside) behind

the couch and out of my sight. With it she had taken a pencil and I could hear her jabbing holes in the paper continuously. Holly said that she felt I would not be able to guess what she was doing. I said no, I did not know for sure, but it sounded like some strong, stabbing feelings were being expressed out of sight. Holly said she was making holes in the paper to make it look like it was snowing in the picture. She said that this idea of making it snow on the paper was her idea but that Susan had stolen it. I said that she was letting me know that something had been stolen from her and now she was keen for me not to steal something from her too, so she needed to hide behind the couch to keep it safely away from me.

At this moment it seemed Holly was illustrating that what had been located in Susan was her anger and aggression, and that she had just got in touch with what had been stolen and given up. In review meetings and parent work undertaken by a colleague, the parents often described Susan as the angry, volatile, and unpredictable one. This had been evidenced to some extent, in episodes of acting out with her own therapist. There was also perhaps a sense of this splitting encompassing the parents too, as they sometimes accentuated the differences between the twins in ways that sounded rigid and fixed: "Susan is the bright one, the angry but passionate one. Holly, well, she's the quiet, withdrawn one."

Bearing the mundane, the stuck-ness and the desolation was as much as I could offer. It was painful to witness Holly's struggle to give birth to any new ideas, or to be able to provide a space in her mind for our different thoughts and ideas to lie side by side. Bartram (2003) and Canham (2003) stressed the prevalence of oedipal problems in therapeutic work with adopted children. Bartram (2003) emphasised the technical importance for the psychotherapist in recognising the inter-relationship between deficit and defence when thinking about oedipal difficulties in such children. She argued that a failure in the external environment to provide what is good enough for the child, contributes to an internal deficit. Bartram believed that defences against oedipal knowledge are interwoven with deficits in the child's ability to think and to feel.

The loss of a birth parent or the lack of a good enough parent can inflict a wound that interferes with the ability to negotiate primitive oedipal anxieties, including an allowing for thoughts and thinking. This notion coincides with Alvarez's (1998) idea of the difficulty facing a child moving from primitive single-track thinking to more sophisticated double-track thinking. This requires the ability to have two contrasting thoughts at the same time, drawing, according to Alvarez, on the oedipal situation "where the child is presented with two objects in a tripartite relation which includes him and leaves room for all three" (p. 215).

On one occasion:

Holly brought out a ladder from the furniture container and I wondered with her what this could be and what might be happening here. She smiled and said that she thought it was a gate that goes on the floor of the house. She placed the ladder inside the house before removing it and placing it, now upturned, against the side of the house. She glanced over at me and said: "It's not big enough to go upstairs." I said that it was a long way up to the top of the house.

This material reminds me of Mrs Klein's (1952/1997) description of the baby taking in the top half of the mother: the nipple, breast, eyes, voice, and face, and the struggle to climb up and access such nourishing, creative riches. This is the precursor to Meltzer's (1992) later thinking about the mind/breast compartment of the claustrum, as viewed from a healthy position outside of the object. Perhaps in Holly's case there had always been a question as to how to reach up to the top half of mummy, the mind/breast, in order to access various riches, including the birthplace of multiple ideas. In this example, Holly appeared to be demonstrating some wonderment as to what upstairs in the claustrum might hold for her. On other occasions, Holly would build a number of towers which were often rather precarious and inevitably came crashing to the ground:

Using all of the blocks she built a tower and this time placed the ladder on top, leaning it against the side of the house. She pointed out that now the ladder was tall enough. I felt encouraged by her determination and desire to reach the top floor. As she began to take the tower down, she asked: "Peter do you know who my friend is that's coming round to play at my house later?" I said no I didn't but was interested that she thought I might know this friend. Holly said smiling that it was Lucy who was coming to play.

On reflection, it seemed that Holly was preoccupied with the question in her mind, of how I could reach up to such heady heights to get a new idea or have a new thought. I think this was also a communication of how little and helpless she felt in the presence of a grown-up mind that could do all of this thinking. Later, she placed a single female toy figure on the top floor, which felt more akin to a magical wish of wanting to be the big girl without the "growing pains" as it were. Perhaps there were feelings of envy at my grown-upness, but I think this also demonstrated the pseudo adult nature of the intruder's life in the claustrum. The wobbly tower of building blocks seemed to depict the fragile nature of her own development and, indeed, her fragile understanding of the processes involved in growing up.

Adhesive and narcissistic forms of identification

As we have seen, Meltzer (1975) explored the theory of dimensionality of mental functioning and how two-dimensionality is characterised by an impoverished imagination. An example of this can be seen in material from session thirty-two:

Holly delved into her box and pulled out a crumpled piece of paper which she seemed pleased to find. She lay the paper flat on the table and smoothed it down with both hands. She picked up a teddy bear and announced: "Do you know what we are going to do now Peter? We are going to draw a teddy." I remarked that she wanted me to be very clear what "we" were going to do in the session today and that we would be doing this together. Holly nodded and placed the teddy on the paper and began to draw around it. Holly expressed her uncertainty as to whether the teddy would fit on the paper. She asked for help in drawing around it. I said that she was in need of help with something I thought she could do by herself. She was concerned about doing some things on her own.

Unable to attempt a freehand representation of the teddy bear, Holly resorted to drawing around it, copying it in two-dimensional fashion. To my mind a three-dimensional process would have involved her observation, her thinking about the teddy, and how it could be represented as part of her own mind on the surface of the paper. I believe that such a strong need for me to be involved in this process pointed towards an adhesive, as well as an intrusive, quality to her identifications with her object. If she is unable to impel herself into her object the next best thing is to adhesively stick to its surface. What motivates such insidious forms of identification with the object, is a powerful fear of becoming unstuck from it. We cannot underestimate the powerful nature of the infantile anxiety of falling and being lost forever. It is a psychic place of perpetual darkness, in fact, an anxiety that materialises from time to time for most of us.

It was hard at such times as these to remain hopeful of anything being different, of any developmental shift, as Holly felt so far out of reach. However, retaining hope was crucial during these stages of Holly's therapy. Her impoverished internal world could be deadening and denuding of liveliness and meaningfulness. My eyes would often feel heavy, my mind drifting off onto the days' other events as Holly continued to play at playing. It was useful to think that she was letting me into her world, letting me have such a strong experience of life inside her object, of life inside the claustroom. This was a space that was hard to leave once inside, where the vivacity and authenticity of real relationships were lost to her.

More lively moments occurred when Holly displayed real triumph and contempt in her desire to prove me wrong. Understandably, given her early experiences, she could be incredibly sensitive to criticism and this fuelled her need to sometimes write or draw out of my sight. Her need to change the structure of games to avoid feelings of humiliation, often came about after I had pointed out the wish to play a safe, familiar game, over again. Me and the therapy were held in contempt at these moments, demonstrating the level of contempt and hatred for being a child, "a learner", and also annihilating the desire for genuine closeness with another. This need to be rid of the baby part of herself was illustrated vividly in one session where, having drawn a family of teddy bears, Holly explained that the newborn baby teddy: "eats only bananas, lots and lots of them". This newborn, it seemed, was already well developed and able to eat solid food. The thought of needing to depend on another for sustenance was inconceivable to Holly.

However, signs of development emerged in a later session when we came together to think about how to make a house out of building blocks, paper, pencils, and sellotape. We successfully achieved this, but in the next session Holly retreated to a more narcissistically withdrawn place in which she seemed to be actively working against the two of us repeating the experience of a creative couple building a house together. Her thought of us coming together again was quickly impinged upon by the need to tidy away and to make a den into which she could disappear. It had the quality of a death, the death of a lively little girl that had fleetingly come to life in the previous session.

"Lost and found"

As the sessions came and went, Holly continued to eke out a kind of existence in the therapy room. However, the activity continued to be of a safe, repetitive kind. Gradually, the play began to shift its focus from games of catch and hide and seek to play involving the couch,

cushions, and the making of dens. My lyrical musings, my thinking out loud, and my curious wondering about her were a desperate attempt, I believe, to coax her out of a place which she was lost within.

I was struck by how often Holly would bring into her sessions objects that she said had been lying in the playground or on the pavement, often ones she had picked up on the walk down the hill to her sessions. She would come into the room and silently empty her bulging pockets onto the couch: coins, stones, small toy figures, a comb, sweet wrappers. More often than not, however, a red elastic band emerged from her pocket. I was always genuinely intrigued by the appearance of the red elastic band which was an ever-present item amongst her findings. With a shake of my head I would exclaim, "Where on earth do these red bands keep coming from?" My curiosity would usually be met with little more than a cold, vacant stare, but eventually some life began to flicker in those deeply sunken eyes, along with the faintest flicker of a smile. Once shown, the objects would always be promptly stuffed back into her deep pockets. She was extremely careful to check they were still safely where she put them at the end of the session. I wondered how much she identified with these lost objects, that had been found and given a new home. This collecting and displaying perhaps also portrayed a girl feeling she has to forage and scavenge for herself, unable and unwilling to make use of what others might provide for her.

Meltzer (1994), in developing Bion's (1962) previous work on the amplification of the model of the mind, distinguished between various categories of learning, the concomitant mental states which lie behind them, and the consequences these have for personality development. One such category of learning is particularly relevant to the case material above; Meltzer described it as "learning by scavenging". It is typified by an envious part of the personality that refuses to ask for help and cannot show gratitude on receiving help. It views skill and knowledge as something magical and secretive: "It watches and listens for items thrown away, as it were, where no please or thank you need enter in, and therefore tends to feel triumph over the stupidity of others for giving away the formula" (p. 394).

During one game of hide and seek, as I sat counting, Holly silently slid under my chair. She began knocking and pushing up on the cushion I was sitting on, as if trying to burrow intrusively through the chair and into me. This event seemed a precursor to what was to become a preoccupation with the building of dens in the room. It was concrete testimony to her need to get inside her object by the back door, the rear entrance, as Meltzer (1992) described it. Squirrelling herself away in her den and popping out to scavenge materials from the room, before flitting back fully laden into her lair:

Making her usual den out of the cushions and chairs in the room, Holly asked for help in placing the blanket on the coat peg of the door so that it provided a makeshift roof to cover the den. Holly then advised me that she was going inside. She quickly scurried inside and I commented upon it being like her running back into her nest. Holly crept back out and switched off the light, shouting for me not to look and not to listen. I said that I was to sit out here and be in the dark about what she might be doing in the den. Holly replied that yes I could think about what she was doing inside. I said it seemed important that I think about her, even though I could not see her.

Meltzer reminded us that “every sense and orifice is a potential portal for the intruder” (1992, p. 71). Indeed, the darkness of the room elicited something of the atmosphere of this inside place in which she existed — this rectum compartment of her object. Holly’s need to be inside her object, to acquire such control over it, meant that I was placed in the position of voyeur, who could only witness events from the outside. I was the one having to wait and guess what was going to happen next, to be surprised or enraptured by some magical act of creation or trickery: a drawing or something made out of paper, which would magically appear from its place of conception within the den. There was something of a seductive, tantalising quality in this play; her need was to deny her own curiosity and sense of not knowing, and leave such experiences with me. A ritual began of Holly taking off shoes and socks within the den and then flinging them with force out the entrance. I spoke of her strong need to get rid of unwanted feelings and experiences, which she was happy for me to have for now.

The functioning of the den

As we have seen, a need to get inside and be part of her object was at times expressed in very concrete terms. Play at this time consisted of her jumping lithely from one piece of furniture to another to avoid touching the floor, and games during which I was expected to guess accurately what she was making or drawing while hidden away in her den. The fact that I should already know what she is thinking and feeling is evidence of the powerful phantasy of her being inside her object, a place where there is no differentiation between our two minds and where we are perceived as being one. My own different thoughts were uninvited as they faced her with our other-ness. This infantile anxiety manifested itself when I brought in my own thoughts or when I decided to step back to think about what she was doing rather than joining in with her. This anxiety became more and more of a feature at the end of sessions and before breaks in the work, when the separateness between us became very real.

Holly’s existence in this inside place challenged me to make meaningful contact with her from my outside place. The ritual of making a den out of cushions, blanket, and chairs was the external manifestation of her inside place. Despite the inside nature of her existence, there was always some willingness to let me know something of the quality of this inside-mummy place, that in phantasy strongly flavoured the atmosphere of her mental life. The den was almost always constructed in front of the door, blocking any entrance or exit. Over time, endings of sessions evoked particular anxiety for Holly, who refused to come out of her den. It was as if the end of the session was experienced as a forceful eviction, an evacuation, which would leave her feeling helpless and vulnerable. The sprinting back to mum’s or dad’s arms in the waiting room at the end of each session made more sense to me when I thought of how strong her need was to not fall forever through the spaces between our minds.

Yet amongst the omnipotent denial of the otherness of the other, which results from such a forceful intrusion into the object, the clinical material began to exhibit a dawning interest in the workings of the mind of another, as this material following a Christmas break illustrates:

Once in the room Holly came and knelt on the couch. She quickly began to take off the cushions and throw them to the floor. Coming over to her box she affected a harsh scolding and contemptuous voice when she remarked: “You have not got me any more paper. Why?” I said no there was no new paper today, but that she was perhaps

worried that over the break I had forgotten all about her. Holly, in a demanding tone, said in that case I could at least help her make the den by the door. I reflected that perhaps she was making a den by the door not so much to keep someone out but to stop Peter from leaving again and therefore losing her from his mind. Holly with some triumph said no I was wrong that it was actually to stop people from getting in. Holly had by now completed her den and jumped excitedly inside. I said that even in her inside-mummy den I thought she worried that I might forget about her. Holly asked me what I meant, I repeated my words, saying that it was hard to believe that I could still be thinking about her even though she was out of sight. Holly said with disdain that she did not know what I was talking about and added, "Anyway, why are you talking Peter?" I said that I was busy out here thinking my thoughts, but that I noticed how hard it was for us to think together about some things. Holly asked me who I was thinking about, I said that a worry was that I did not think about her over the break, she worried in case I had forgotten all about her.

Often she would take the waste paper bin into her den along with her toy box and would sit inside sorting out "good from bad" as she described it. Usually it was the useful objects, her drawings and writings, that found their way into the bin. This illustrated the difficulties that belie life in the claustrum, the difficulties in being able to distinguish between what is rubbish, and what is valuable and worth keeping. This existence in the rectal compartment of the internal mother offered up a certain paradox. Although it was felt to offer Holly the unconscious phantasy of having a place as an inside baby, it was at the bottom end, a portal where things could just as easily get evacuated out.

Fisher wrote: "In Meltzer's exploration of the projective aspects of projective identification ... the mode of entry in phantasy into the mother's body determines the quality of the experience, the phantasy of the nature of what is found inside her body" (1999, p. 73).

Holly's sessions strongly suggested that the inside-mummy space which she occupied was filled with little that resembled psychic food for thought. Instead, she was an interloper in a world of unprocessed, discarded psychic matter which was incapable of providing much mental nourishment.

Intrusive entering and immersion into the claustrum is felt to offer refuge from external and internal reality, namely the reality that we are separate, that there is separateness between us. This allows for increased omnipotence and avoidance of infantile states of helplessness, often characterised by concrete thinking. Holly's intrusive entry into her object was not out of a sense of curiosity or interest in learning about what was going on inside, it was more a sense of greedily and enviously taking possession of this space. It arose out of an overwhelming need to obliterate the idea of separateness, and out of envy of those grown-up minds that could think thoughts for themselves.

Such intense anxieties made more sense when placed alongside Holly's experience of being a twin. Fighting not simply for sole occupation of this inside space, but for a sense of something resembling her own space or home was perhaps one of her earliest experiences. Her entering the den through the bottom, by the door, was not only an expression of her internal phantasy of occupying the bottom end of things, but also allayed fears of having her space invaded by her sister Susan who, quite literally, was having her therapy sessions at the

same time in the same part of the building.

The splitting, along with the rivalry and envy, seemed only to add to Holly's sense of deprivation and impoverishment. On many occasions, Susan was described as the one full of life, imagination, and creativity — Holly, by comparison, being experienced as empty and hollow. In one poignant moment during a session towards the end of our work, Holly drew a picture of a family by the sea, then explained that she was going to draw a piece of seaweed on a small, separate piece of paper. I pointed out to Holly that the picture of the seaweed looked like a baby inside its mummy's tummy. Holly nodded her head, she stared longingly at the picture, drawing round and round the outside of the mother's tummy with her finger.

Encouraging moments

My tentative interpretations about the difficulties of being together, to think in this shared space, and her worry about being left and abandoned by this therapist mummy were crucial in trying to reach out to Holly. I often mused to myself, or to the four walls of our room, just how hard it was for us to be together in this space, it being so much safer being on the inside, and having me here on the outside. Barely perceptible changes began to take place. Holly would fleetingly poke her head out of the den to look curiously at me as I spoke, before quickly popping back inside, a growing interest in the mind of another.

In session seventy-one:

Holly and mum had arrived early only to see me walking to reception with an interpreter that was present in a session with a family I had seen before Holly's arrival. The interpreter happened to be heavily pregnant at this time. Once in our session Holly was keen to find out who this person was and I was both struck and encouraged by her interest and curiosity. As I interpreted her interest and wish to know who this person I had been with was, Holly collected paper and scissors from her box and began to fold the paper and cut out the squares formed by the folds. I commented upon her noticing me with this other person and now she was busy cutting things apart. I added that perhaps there was some interest here in what can happen when people come together to share their thoughts, that a new thought or idea might be made.

Holly informed me that she was not going to cut up all of the paper and added that she was going to turn all of the squares into pages that would make up a storybook. She cut out more squares and asked if we could count them all together.

This session illustrated an encouraging shift in our work together. Holly was allowing herself to be curious; she was beginning to respond to and make contact with a separate mind that was in the room with her. There was a sense of Holly really emerging from her inside place. I believed that the cutting of the paper was an externalised expression of her thinking about how something new is formed, and what can happen when different thoughts or ideas come together. I wondered if the imminent birth of a baby, a new beginning, had put Holly in touch with anxieties about her own difficult beginnings, which she could now begin to contemplate. It seemed a welcome excursion had taken place into the upper half of the object which houses the thinking mind.

Further encouraging signs of life emerged in Holly's play and in our interactions towards the end of the first year of our work. Symbolic play with a soft toy appeared, a toy which before, like the baby part of herself, had been treated with contempt, either left discarded in the box or flung unceremoniously from her den. In contrast, she now looked after this toy with real tenderness.

The room itself was used more symbolically in terms of it becoming a home for her thinking and thoughts, a room of her own in which to explore and be curious. As the following extract suggests, despite the persistent doubts about feeling that she could exist and stay in the mind of her object, something more sustainable was perhaps coming to life:

After building her den and crawling inside with the waste bin, Holly said that she would now sing a song she had made up. I said that I wondered what her song would be about. Holly sang to a nondescript tune: "Why do you go outside, why do you stay inside, I go out to get toilet paper." Before I had an opportunity to reflect upon this, Holly threw out the bin and said that she had another song: "Why are you going outside, you might meet a stranger, you might meet a friend, why do you go and why do you stay." I reflected that the song was very interesting and seemed to be about how scary it was coming outside and how it would be much easier to stay inside where it felt safe. I said that sometimes perhaps being stuck inside was not such a nice place to be.

I was particularly encouraged by this material, which seemed to suggest that there was thinking and struggling going on inside. She seemed to be expressing the nature of a dilemma in terms of whether to step outside to build a home of her own or stay as an unwelcome lodger in the home of another. Something inside had come to life. Accompanying these slight shifts was the growing sense of a space for both our thoughts. Indeed, Holly displayed increased openness in the sharing of her thoughts and feelings. Her dens were built closer to me and away from the door, they were more open, there was less of a need to keep me on the outside and more of a sense of being able to exist on the outside herself. There was a growing sense of two-ness in the work, of two minds coming together to work out how to make a plane fly, or how to build a house.

Despite such shifts, Holly's omnipotence and the nature of her need to get inside or fiercely stick to her object continued to feature. My challenging of this omnipotence through the rules and boundaries of the therapy created some frustration and anger, which Holly became able to voice, albeit from the safe confines of her den. Importantly, I began to question my thinking about her level of omnipotence; perhaps it was not only a defensive denial of reality, but important to her acquiring a sense of potency and agency, steps along the way to her securing a home for her own sense of self.

As we neared our second Christmas holiday, Holly had been strongly avoiding thinking about the forthcoming break in the therapy, despite us making a calendar to count down the sessions. She was also refusing to help tidy away the room at the end of sessions and her behaviour was increasingly omnipotent and controlling.

Holly took off her shoes in front of me in a much less inhibited way. I thought back to all of the times before when this would have been done covertly behind the side of

the couch or from inside her den. I reflected that it may be important that we check the calendar to see how many sessions we had left. I was aware that the concepts of time, dates and number were often still a struggle for her to grasp. Holly reluctantly approached her box but turned away back to the couch and began taking off the cushions. She suddenly stopped and looked over at me. She asked in a poignant way: "Will I be having more sessions here after Xmas?"

She had begun to put into words her worst fears about things coming to an end. With her articulating her wish never to leave, to stay here in therapy forever, it was important for me to think with her about the temptation to go back to her inside-mummy place, rather than enjoy the excitement of inhabiting a home and a world of her own. It was also important to acknowledge that Holly was voicing anxieties about losing something that had become valuable to her, that she would miss if it was no longer there.

I believe that the strong psychoanalytic framework of the therapy was key in providing a safe space for Holly to be curious about a psychic reality that involved oedipal configurations, which were previously too overwhelming to construe. In one of the later sessions Holly heard my keys jangling in my pocket:

She wondered what the keys were for. I pointed out her interest in what was going on inside me, wondering what doors the keys perhaps opened. Holly said they were probably my house keys. I said there was perhaps a difficult thought about her being locked out of a part of my life. Holly replied by saying she was going to make a lock out of paper for her own house (the den) and keys with which to lock and unlock her house and keeps things safe.

This feeling of having a safe space allowed Holly to become more curious about what was behind the parental bedroom door. The keys and lock perhaps represented the sexual intercourse of the parental couple and that part of the relationship Holly felt excluded from. The various layers of the oedipal complex are underpinned by such realisations as the reality of parental sexuality. Ronald Britton (1989) suggested that this realisation leads to the formation of a triangular space bounded by the three persons involved, allowing a child not simply to feel like an excluded observer of the parental relationship, but also to observe, to think about and conversely to a feeling of being observed and "known by his parents in relation to them" (p. 89).

Conclusion

After almost two years of intensive psychotherapy our work came to an end. I knew that further therapeutic work would be needed at some point to address the acute environmental failure Holly had experienced earlier in her life. I was also aware of strong destructive currents that were perhaps an indelible part of her own temperament and which would resurface during puberty. Reports in final review meetings with parents and school teachers were very encouraging; Holly demonstrated more liveliness and imagination in her play at home and at school, she was able to form more meaningful relationships with peers, and, despite learning

difficulties, had improved numeracy and literacy. I thought about this as Holly beginning to find and reclaim the lost, good bits of her-self, which had previously been given to others.

During the final sessions of our work together, Holly displayed a growing ability in her play to draw upon a developing imagination. She created storybooks, and although the narrative was often rudimentary, it was based upon thoughts and ideas from her own mind, and more importantly, from a gradual putting together of her life story in her mind. This culminated in a drawing of her birth mother alongside her adoptive mother, the sense being of questions slowly forming, allowing for depth and complexity to be added to the narrative of her life.

Meltzer was adamant that for the intruder, the imposter, the fraud, and the uninvited, there is only exile from the world of intimacy and from the aesthetic beauty of the world “which at best he can see, hear, smell and taste only second-hand through the medium of the object” (1992, p. 72). Finding a sense of being at home is therefore a developmental achievement, the development of an inner space allowing for secure object relationships to take place. For children such as Holly who are fostered or adopted and who have often experienced acute levels of deprivation and neglect, intrusive flight into the object as a means of psychic survival is perhaps inevitable. However, as we have seen above, this immersion of the fragile self within the object has consequences for the growth and development of the personality. Sorenson captured this predicament:

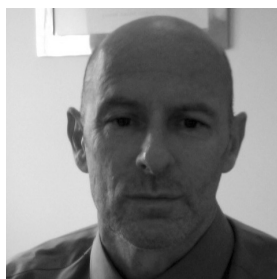
Escaping such a claustrophobic world becomes a terrifying ordeal as it means moving towards a more genuine existence, which comprises of authentic levels of connective-ness with others. It also recognises the separateness of the object as well as the beauty and goodness of the creative couple. (2016, p. 46)

As psychoanalytic psychotherapists working with children like Holly who need to build or re-build a home, we need to temporarily give up our minds to allow for a disruption, and at times a destructive intrusion into our psychic experience, which we might consider to be our home. It is only then that the nowhere or homeless child can start to incorporate and internalise the therapist as a continuous and real object, a live-company which paves the way for the construction of a home of their own.

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