jaPa

Alexander Stein

52/3

MUSIC, MOURNING, AND CONSOLATION

The attacks of September 11, 2001, prompt a consideration of the role of music in mourning and trauma. The intrapsychic functions of music in the mourning process are explored, as is music as a unique response to trauma and as a special aesthetic expression of a range of affects connected with grief. Also explored is the allied notion of consolation, a topic underdeveloped in the analytic literature.

And grief at long hard last breaks a way for the voice.
—VIRGIL

. . the impact of grief must stun the whole soul and impede its freedom of action; as it happens to us, at the hot alarm of some very bad news, to feel ourselves caught, benumbed, and as it were paralyzed from any movements, so that the soul, relaxing afterward into tears and lamentations, seems to unbend, extricate itself, and gain more space and freedom.
—MONTAIGNE

Throughout history, people have devised ways to contend with profound loss and to symbolically express the affects it engenders. These strategies are of great variety: some memorialize, ritualize, idealize, preserve, commemorate, or venerate the loss, while others disavow, deny, eradicate, diminish, assuage, quell, or reverse it. Typically

Member, National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis.
An earlier version of this paper was presented, with recorded musical examples, at the 2003 Winter Meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association, New York, under the aegis of the Music and Psychoanalysis Discussion Group. The author thanks Stuart Feder, Dale Boesky, Jeffrey Prager, and the anonymous reviewers of *JAPA,* whose valuable comments and critiques helped shape the present version. Submitted for publication March 12, 2003.

included is a mourning, funereal, or lamentational ritual, whether as a formalized public ceremony in response to a wide-scale calamity or as a modest, even solitary, commemoration following a private loss.The rite's form and content will be shaped by an amalgam of religious, secular, and cultural factors, as well as by the complex intrapsychic reactions shown by individuals contending with loss and grief. Invariably, one or more traditional art forms—music, painting, sculpture, photography, poetry, theater, architecture, dance, cuisine—will be incorporated.

In the wake of September 11, 2001, I was moved to observe that among the many expressions of anguish and commemoration—which, in addition to the art forms just mentioned, included ribbons, personal mementos, candles, flowers, and other iconography—music played a prominent and clearly special role. In the months following, memorial concerts were held almost daily, radio stations broadcast programs devoted to listeners' musical responses, and a repertoire of repeatedly performed works emerged. Some are rooted in the Western socio-religious culture and tradition, while many others are from the standard classical repertoire.

Why were certain pieces of music chosen again and again by such a broad spectrum of the populace? What features might they share? What functions do they serve? Transcending the bounds of aesthetic or cultural considerations, such questions can be focused to highlight their intrapsychic and affective components: What is it about the constellation of affects connected with grief—and, more particularly, the mental state of a person in mourning—that apparently finds such felicitous expression or evocation in music? Does music possess properties unique among the arts—and if so, what might they be—that lend themselves so peerlessly to capturing and conveying the affect of grief that it has occupied so meaningful and nearly universal a role in the mourning process?

My aims here are threefold. First I will explore the intrapsychic functions of music in the mourning process, both as a unique response to trauma and as a special aesthetic expression of a range of affects connected with grief. Second, I will discuss the allied notion of consolation, which, though of considerable importance in clinical work, is surprisingly underdeveloped in the analytic literature. Combined, these inquiries can yield a sharpened delineation of the biphasic relationship of loss and consolation, a sequence that finds outward expression in distinct yet related musical forms, one of grief, another of solace. My

third aim, more personal, relates to my own ongoing efforts at working through the traumatic impact of 9/11 and its aftermath.

The effects of traumatic experience can be likened to concentric circles of sound waves, where the sonic boom is deafening nearer the epicenter but diminishes in amplitude as it radiates out. Analogously, September 11 was a human tragedy that altered many lives, not homogeneously but in many different ways (for a poignant, related discussion of "zones of sadness," see Strozier 2002). For some, it was cataclysmic and immutable: thousands died, thousands more were orphaned or widowed, and families and lives and dreams for the future were horribly, irrevocably disfigured. For others, the impact was less catastrophic—less permanent, less direct, or less severe. There are those for whom it may have come to represent the unleashing of some dreadful, quasi-real id fantasy. For yet others the event seemed more distant and was translated into architectural, material, economic, civic, iconic, nationalistic, or ideological terms, or was defensively conceptualized as an abstraction, something "down there" that would eventually dissipate in consciousness, as did the acrid stench from the smoldering fires at Ground Zero that for months permeated New York City's air. But perhaps, as with all narratives of experience psychoanalytically understood, how trauma is individually metabolized is ultimately of greater significance than indexing its relative location within a communal experiential matrix.

MUSIC AND RESPONSES TO TRAUMATIC LOSS

My wife and I lived across the street from the World Trade Center. From our apartment, we enjoyed panoramic views northwest and northeast. To the west, open expanses up the Hudson and across to New Jersey; to the east, the towers dominated, soaring so high from our vantage point near their base that you had to crane your neck out the windows to see the tops. Early on the morning of the eleventh, I was in my consulting room a few blocks north of the towers. My wife, then almost three months pregnant, was at home. My eight o'clock patient had just left when my wife phoned, exclaiming that a plane had crashed into one of the towers. Before the next hour had passed, the world as we knew it would be changed. Within minutes, a second plane had impaled the other tower. We spoke again. Smoke and fire were everywhere; people were hanging out of windows on the upper floors,

frantically waving; bodies were flying out of the buildings. My wife's impulse was to leave. I visualized the trajectory of debris falling from that height in relation to our apartment and, never considering it even remotely possible that the buildings would collapse, suggested she would be safer staying inside. Before hanging up, I reminded her to turn on her cell phone. In the street below my office, I was absorbed into a crowd, each person's face an entry in the catalogue of expressions of horrified disbelief; the south tower fell.

In a state of shock, I was aware of the thought that the advice to my wife to stay inside may have been fatally wrong. Given the proximity of our apartment to the trade center—a distance not of city blocks but of feet—if upper portions of the tower had toppled to the side even partially, our building would surely have been crushed. I had no idea if she was alive or among the untold thousands whose deaths so many of us had just witnessed. In a daze, I cancelled the day's sessions and began to walk as fast as I could toward home. The north tower collapsed as I approached the perimeter of chaos. A couple of blocks from what was about to become known as Ground Zero, a phalanx of police officers finally stopped me. I stood there, in the swirling grayish-white cloud, the vaporized remnants of buildings and lives,[1] waiting, scanning every anguished face coming toward me, looking for the one I needed to see but did not. Finally, finally, late in the afternoon, my cell phone came to life and I heard my wife's voice. She was safe and physically unharmed. Moments after we had hung up from that last phone call, she had been driven from the apartment by the avalanche of debris that had come crashing through our windows as the first tower collapsed. After bunkering in the basement with neighbors and other tenants during the fall of the second tower, she had ultimately been evacuated by police boat. She was on Ellis Island. Unlike so many others, we were fortunate; we were eventually reunited. But what we once called home was now in ruins, buried in pulverized debris, and locked down behind military blockades in an ashen wasteland designated the frozen zone. With the clothes on our backs, we embarked on what would be a harrowing three-month odyssey as refugees.

[1]The deluge of paper that blanketed downtown that morning was quickly replaced by a papering of another sort: the heart-rending "missing" posters with which distraught family members beseeched information about loved ones who had, quite literally, evaporated.

There is much that could be said about my daily clinical work during this period, perhaps adding to the revelatory literature of the ill or injured analyst, or of clinicians in countries where terrorism and its traumatic impact on patient and practitioner alike are more commonplace, or to the poignant accounts of displaced and refugee analysts in Europe during World War II. But my intent here is simply to provide a personally meaningful framework from which to explore the relationship between music and traumatic loss.

Before beginning analytic training and going into private practice, I was a professional pianist. Music remains a central part of my life, and in the months following 9/11, I was keenly aware of its absence. This was not merely a product of the circumstance of being homeless, and of not having a piano or recordings and a sound system. Rather, my internal world was dominated by a dense and silent pall, as if an entire mode of existence were in an airless vacuum. Music, even the usual internal listening of especially beloved works, had been muted. Paradoxically, life in the auditory sphere was in other respects heightened immeasurably, but calibrated, it seemed, to a narrow spectrum of sounds: my ears now were attuned more to the roar of fighter jets and the wail of sirens, to my patients, to my wife's breathing at night, and to a strong little heartbeat pulsing through the speaker of an ultrasound device.

Theodor Reik (1953) provides an example of a different music-related response to trauma. In a chapter of *The Haunting Melody* titled "The Unknown Self Sings," Reik describes his feelings after being informed of the death of Karl Abraham, his friend, mentor, and former analyst. Reik recalls a reaction of intense shock, which is soon overtaken by numbness, but admits feeling no immediate grief. Walking alone through a snowy wood, he tries to focus his thoughts on composing a speech Freud has asked him to deliver in Abraham's memory at the next meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, but he is too inwardly absorbed by his mood to concentrate. He notes that the trees have suddenly become "menacingly" high, and that the landscape itself has been transformed into something "solemn and sinister"; he is aware of a "heavy and oppressive silence" (p. 221). Amid this somber reflection, he becomes aware of humming a melody to himself. At first unrecognized, the refrain eventually reveals itself to be the first bars of the chorale from the last movement of Mahler's Second Symphony (the *Resurrection*). A bit later, he recalls the text that the chorus sings to the accompaniment of the particular melody he keeps hearing in his

mind's ear: "You will rise again, my dust, after a short rest; / Immortal life will He grant who called."

Reik realizes that this strain of music and its accompanying text has become the leitmotif of his mourning. But far from consoling him, it begins to recur with such intrusive insistence as to become a disturbance. He wonders what his unconscious is communicating by way of this motif. The experience, he writes, was that he could hear its message but could not understand its meaning; it was as if "it had been expressed in a foreign language" he did not speak.

How can we begin to understand these examples? Preliminarily, I suggest that in each, music—specifically present for Reik and nonspecifically absent for me—can be conceived as a compromise formation, a condensed symbolic transformation of unconscious mental functioning in which overwhelming affect is rendered as an auditory hallucination. The function of such formations, which use music rather than visual images or narratives as a symbolic mode, is akin to that of the manifest dream work, which presents abstract primary process affect and content, which has not yet reached the level of conceptual symbolization. What is recalled—visually in the dream, aurally in music—may appear or sound absurd, chaotic, unreal, or incapable of being contextualized, but ultimately its associative significance can be deciphered.

PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVES ON MUSIC

There is a vast repertoire of music associated with funereal rites and lamentation, but a paucity of scholarly writing about it, particularly in the psychoanalytic literature. Alec Robertson's *Requiem: Music of Mourning and Consolation* (1968) exhaustively details much of the voluminous historical material from a musicological perspective, with particular focus on music in the Western Christian tradition. Despite the far-reaching scope of his research, Robertson necessarily left aside large tracts of the standard repertoire, as well as music from other traditions and cultures. Pollock (1975a,b), in his extensive writings on loss, bereavement, and mourning, expanded on Robertson's contribution, giving greater attention to certain intrapsychic aspects of music in the mourning process, and illustrating how musical creativity is influenced by processes of mourning and memorialization. This is also addressed, though without a specific focus on mourning, by Nass

(1975) in his exploration of inspiration in the composition of music, and by Feder (1981) in his probing inquiry into nostalgia in the music of Charles Ives. In addition, a number of contributions, particularly in the areas of Holocaust and trauma studies, have explored creativity as a response to traumatic loss (see e.g., Aberbach 1989; Laub and Podell 1995).

These contributions represent a significant advance from earlier attempts at understanding and explaining the dynamic interplay between music and affect. There is a long history of simplistically transliterating the affective experience of music into descriptive metaphors, or of ascribing moods, emotional qualities, even colors, to certain keys and to major and minor modes (e.g., C minor might be considered an emotionally "darker" or more brooding key than, say, F major, or a work predominantly in D minor is thought to be more melancholy than a piece in the "brighter" key of G major).

Today there is an appreciable and sophisticated body of literature that synthesizes the various multidisciplinary perspectives in ways congruent with psychoanalytic thinking. These need not be surveyed here, save for the following overview. Noy (1993) has distilled three primary conceptualizations from the many formulations evolved over time to explain the interrelation of music and emotional experience: (1) the *narrative route*—music is itself the site of some immanent, pre-encoded narrative to be transmitted to a listener; (2) the *direct route*—music is isomorphically concordant with the listener's emotions; and (3) the *indirect route*—the listener's emotional reactions are the result of defensive ego-reorganizational activity triggered by auditory stimuli. This last, a formulation promulgated in the 1950s, has largely fallen out of favor, leaving adherents of the remaining approaches to continue debating how, or if, music "means" or "represents" something—and thus whether music is itself the site of some pre-encoded narrative to be transmitted to a listener—or whether it is isomorphically concordant with the listener's emotions (i.e., whether, as Pratt [1952] suggests, "music sounds the way emotion feels").

The prevailing psychoanalytic view is less preoccupied with provenance, but rather attends to the dynamic interplay between what can be roughly distinguished as internal elements (psychological, psychoacoustic, psychosomatic, affective, proprioceptive) and external ones (musical, cultural, environmental, sociohistorical, political-aesthetic). Rose (1992) underscores this conceptualization in noting that "human

emotion cannot exist embedded in the inorganic structure of aesthetic form. The structure can only offer the necessary perceptual conditions for an emotional response to occur" (p. 216).

The interaction between music and a listener (or composer) is thus neither an aesthetic creation in which the wealth of human emotion inheres in toto nor a concordant sounding board that resonates sympathetically with our internal affective life, but rather might be more accurately construed as an object relation. As such, an encounter with music triggers complex intrapsychic events or responses. The aesthetic/emotional gestalt experience of music's effects within us, then, can be generally understood as comprising perceptions, distortions, and condensations of time and memory, as well as archaically derivative fantasies, defenses, and modes of internalizing, expressing, and responding to affects, all operating within an abstract primary process mode of registering, construing, constructing, and reconstructing experience (Stein 2004). This array of psychophilosophical conceptualizations has been synthesized by Feder (2004) in the felicitous notion of *music as simulacrum*, music as an analogue of the totality of mental life.

MUSIC AND MOURNING

This having been said, how can we more specifically understand what qualifies any given composition as being music of (or for) mourning? Need it follow a specified program or prefigured format, such as the Requiem Mass, the Dies Irae (the chant for the dead from the Catholic mass), the Stabat Mater, or the Lachrymosa? What characteristics or aesthetic properties need it have to be unquestionably associated with mourning by most listeners? What installs certain works of music over so many others in such a collectively spontaneous way as occurred, for example, after 9/11, when millions of people listened essentially en masse to the Mozart *Requiem*.[2]

[2]On September 11, 2002, memorial concerts were held throughout the world marking the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. One of the most ambitious in sheer scope was dubbed the "Rolling Requiem," a "worldwide choral commemoration of all those lost and those who helped others," in which more than 17,000 singers, almost 5,000 instrumentalists and thousands of volunteers in twenty-six countries participated in two hundred performances of the Mozart *Requiem* (K. 626), each commencing precisely at 8:46 A.M. local time (the time the first plane struck the north tower) in every time zone in the world (2002, rollingrequiem.org).

For answers to these questions, we must look, on the one hand, to religious beliefs and rituals concerning death, burial, and notions of an afterlife, together with cultural and aesthetic conventions and traditions, and, on the other, to the nearly limitless panoply of individual fantasies and reactions concerning trauma and object loss.

The Latin requiem mass—which as a musical form reached a prolonged apogee extending from the high Renaissance through the subsequent baroque, classical, and romantic periods—evolved from early Christian prayers and ceremonies performed at rites for the dead. Many of these ancient prayers sought to dispatch the departed souls in ways consistent with beliefs about death. Some were addressed to God and beseeched forgiveness on behalf of the deceased for sins committed during life. Others bade farewell to the dead with such phrases as "vivas in Deo" (live in God) or "in pace Christi" (in the peace of Christ), or directly entreated the dead—presumably already in the afterlife—for merciful intercession on behalf of their survivors on earth. Death as an intermediate stage of rest leading to resurrection and ultimate immortality was at the core of this belief system (Pollock 1975a). This transfiguring process leading to immortality in an afterlife became the dominant theme in burial liturgy, a point of some importance in understanding music as a response to mourning, particularly with regard to the dynamic interrelation of music, trauma, and time, a topic to which I will return.

Fundamentally, mourning music is music listened to or composed to commemorate a death or loss, or otherwise used to express feelings associated with grief and bereavement. Such works are aesthetic representations in response to a traumatic event and involve what can be called *auditory symbolism* (Feder 1981). While any work of music might serve an auditory symbolic function, there is an abundant repertoire especially suited to mourning. Such compositions typically include requiems, funereal and memorial music, laments, dirges, spirituals, and elegies, to which we can add certain operas, symphonies, string quartets, songs and other vocal or choral works, and piano or other instrumental pieces. Because content is not limited by form, it is not at all surprising to find examples of mourning music written for any instrument and in almost any compositional form (for a detailed discussion of form, see Noy 1979).

The creation of mourning music may have a significance for its composer distinct from the experience of an auditor. But in either case there need be no precondition or direct motivation of being in a state

of mourning or of sublimating consciously felt grief-related affects. For every work of music associated with death or mourning the creation of which can be traced directly to a precipitant of loss, there will be another that was composed without any such catalyst. Mourning music, with the requiem perhaps its grandest but by no means exclusive expression in Western culture, is now a genre unto itself, with its own performance-practice tradition; no specifically mournful occasion is needed to program a concert hall performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* or the Bach B Minor Mass, or to revel in the sonic gorgeousness of a recording of, say, the Brahms *Deutsches Requiem*.

Although certain compositions, indeed certain composers, seem more than others to capture or communicate a sense of grief, there is a copious and diverse panoply of representative works and styles that can auditorily symbolize the multifaceted, overdetermined constellation of affects connected to trauma and loss, and no roster of mourning music repertoire could make the claim of being exhaustive. Such music can encompass an emotionally expressive spectrum as broad and varied as individual responses to grief itself. In this regard, Bowlby (1961), Siggins (1966), and more recently Hagman (1995), among others, have surveyed the literature on mourning and usefully delineated the wide array of reactions involved in relinquishing an important object. In particular, beyond reactions involving the loss of positive aspects of a relationship, the mourning process and responses to trauma can include components of guilt, hostility, ambivalence, emancipation, relief, revenge, anxiety, helplessness, denial, or remorse; can occasion somatic symptoms or the reactivation of unresolved conflicts; can be experienced as a wish fulfillment; or can take on a punitive significance (Siggins 1966, pp. 18–19).

While music can be conceived as operating outside the realm of symbolic function, as making other sorts of appeals to the psychic aparatus, I am suggesting that music be understood primarily as a symbolic expression—a simulacrum—of mental functioning that here correlates roughly with the diverse intrapsychic elements of the mourning process. These basic categories suggest that music can be composed or listened to (1) for grieving, (2) for solace and comfort, (3) to provide a sense of belonging, (4) to provide a sense of hope that life can go on, and (5) to provide a sense of triumph over adversity. In this regard, we can begin to discern distinctions between music of grief and music of solace.

While technically detailed musical analyses of specific works can be illuminating, sophisticated musical knowledge is not in my view a requisite for understanding the psychological facets of aesthetic response.[3]

In general, mourning music is associated primarily with reverentially hushed tones, steady, restrained, and measured tempi, a relatively uncomplicated and stable metric structure, and a straightforward, even spare thematic motif. It is commonly characterized as bleak, somber, desolate, despondent, poignant, sorrowful, melancholic, autumnal, or yearning *(sehnsuchtsvoll).* Its musical vocabulary is frequently characterized by mimetic motifs and gestures that call to mind sighs or other vocalizations allied with sadness, and is typically constructed using diminished chords, ambiguous tonalities, and delayed or abandoned resolutions. These elements of musical vocabulary and syntax coalesce in ways that allow the music to evoke a feeling of wistful melancholy, to create a sound world that we experience as lyrical, inward, reflective, and intermittently tense, and that invites the attentive listener to embark on an introspective or meditative journey. The musical architecture creates both a sense of timelessness and an ambience of spaciousness, allowing the listener to enter into what Rose (1992), following Winnicott, describes as "the safe holding environment provided by the secure ambience of an aesthetic structure" (p. 220). Consider further that the first Latin word of the Introit in the mass for the dead, *requiem*, translates as "rest." Thus, with reference to seemingly prototypical works of mourning music, we can begin to appreciate how certain musical forms might through their prosodic and harmonic elements isomorphically evoke or capture states of rest, sleep, peacefulness, timelessness, lifelessness, or psychic death. Looking ahead to the discussion of consolation, I suggest that music of this type facilitates a recuperation, however transient, of ego functioning diminished, defensively split off, or fragmented in the wake of loss or trauma.

With regard to reactions of hostility, aggression, revenge, rage, ambivalence, or other such affect, or what Bowlby (1961) calls the "protest reaction" to loss, we must consider music that can be experienced as wrenching, anguished, tormented, brooding, searing, furious, harsh, or frenzied. Exemplary works by such composers as Stravinsky,

[3]It should be borne in mind that music is more for listening to than reading about. Narrative descriptions alone of the experience of listening to music can aspire only to be evocatively metaphoric approximations. As the singer-songwriter Elvis Costello has mordantly noted, "writing about music is like dancing about architecture" (White 1983, p. 52).

Shostakovich, and Prokofiev that employ a strident, even grotesque or brutal, modernist harmonic and rhythmic vocabulary (but nonetheless remain rooted in a tonal, postromantic tradition) aurally epitomize these characteristic and often harshly conflictual and ambitendant emotions. Similarly, programmatic pieces like Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliette*—which contains sections titled "Juliette's Funeral" and "Romeo's Death"—are readily accessible in hewing so closely to narrative templates involving unresolved oedipal rage (rivalry, renunciation, and vendetta) and the frantic, impotent infantile fury of object abandonment. Similarly, music often accompanies a text, be it liturgical, secular, or poetic, and it may be the libretto that dictates how it is classified. In this regard, certain lieder and operatic arias may come closer than any other musical forms in creating a sonic portrait of grief-related affects. They do this more by explicitly depicting the feeling—by telling a story in both music and words—than by symbolic displacement or representational allusion.

Certain works qualify as mourning music for no intrinsic musical reason, but simply for having been a favorite of a lost loved one, perhaps specially shared or viewed as idiosyncratically and endearingly characteristic of him or her, and therefore nostalgically linked to memories of the lost object. Superficially understood, the piece of music becomes a keepsake or cherished memento. More deeply, in line with the notion that denial or similar defense mechanisms are prototypical components of the mourning process, I suggest that music of this type can be thought to function as an object of transitory identification, in that the aesthetic reverie evoked by listening to it implements a fantasy in which the painful reality of loss is denied or disavowed.

Conversely, while there are times when art can effectively represent experiences and affects too intense or overwhelming to express directly, it is also possible that a particular piece of music, precisely by being so intimately linked to the lost object, can be too searing and too real a reminder of the loss (Stein 2004). Rather than consoling, the music will pierce the protective mechanisms on which the bereaved rely. In these instances, a work of music may be pointedly shunned or proscribed, treated like a hallowed mausoleum that however revered must be counterphobically circumvented or padlocked and never entered. Such a suppressive response, perhaps paradoxically, actually serves as a sacred conservatory, preserving through silence a displaced embodiment of the beloved.

As for responses of relief or emancipation, some mourning music will be exuberantly celebratory, such as the Bach motets (BWV 225–230), commissioned after death as jubilant, life-affirming monuments, or unabashedly rollicking and rambunctious, as in a New Orleans jazz funeral.[4] Other works, as expressions of related affect states, may be experienced as sublime, transcendental, or ecstatic (e.g., the last movements of Liszt's B Minor Sonata or Bruckner's unfinished Ninth Symphony, or the slow movement of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*).

From the vantage point of the composer, mourning music is a genre that can serve more than one master, balancing the often competing demands of muse, economics, politics, and professional ambition. Numerous works used in funereal settings were commissioned not as mournful laments but to satisfy the grandiose narcissistic needs of a wealthy or powerful person, and in that regard function essentially as ostentatious musical tombstones. And yet other compositions might mistakenly or accidentally be included in the genre, for instance certain works by Liszt and Rachmaninov, both of whom were deeply fascinated with the musical possibilities of the Dies Irae and incorporated it as a thematic subject in various contexts, none especially linked with mourning (e.g., Liszt's *Totentanz,* Rachmaninov's *Isle of the Dead* and *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*). Other examples are Beethoven's *Tempest* and *Pathetique* Sonatas, and the Brahms *Tragic* Overture, all of which, despite titles at least ostensibly indicating themes of pathos or loss, are rarely associated with mourning. The psychobiographical underpinnings of these composers' fascination with the Dies Irae is itself a rich avenue for investigation, which I will not pursue here.

It is worth mentioning two additional groupings. One contains works that have become associated with grief and mourning primarily by virtue of their connection with or use in a work in another medium. Prime examples include Kodály's Piano Piece op. 3, no. 2, to which Martha Graham choreographed her 1930 dance piece, *Lamentation.* In

[4]One of the more distinctive aspects of New Orleans culture, the jazz funeral is a major celebration whose roots reach back to Africa. The practice of having music during funeral processions was added to the basic African pattern of celebration for most aspects of life, including death. As brass bands became increasingly popular in the early eighteenth century, they were frequently called on to play processional music. On the way to the cemetery it was customary to play very slowly and mournfully—a dirge or an old Negro spiritual such as "Nearer My God to Thee"—but on the return from the cemetery the band would strike up a rousing "When the Saints Go Marching In" or a ragtime song like "Didn't He Ramble."

film, the Adagio in G Minor by Albinoni was employed evocatively in the soundtrack of Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* (1981), Barber's Adagio for Strings in Oliver Stone's *Platoon* (1986), and Pachabel's Canon in D in Robert Redford's *Ordinary People* (1980). Each of these films deals with themes of loss.

Finally, although my discussion focuses on music culled from the Western classical canon, the use of music in the context of the mourning process is by no means so limited. Noteworthy examples from other Western musical idioms include, in brief, the soulful ballads of Nick Drake, which are veritable homilies of suicidal ideation, as are the songs of Kurt Cobain with Nirvana; Neil Young's "Let's Roll," inspired by the final words of Todd Beamer, a passenger on United Airlines Flight 93, hijacked and destroyed in Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001; Bruce Springsteen's recent album, *The Rising,* similarly composed in response to 9/11; and Elton John's musical eulogy for Lady Diana Spencer, a reworking of his "Candle in the Wind." Additionally, the blues and country-and-western represent entire genres more or less devoted to representing themes of loss and sorrow. In military tradition, the playing of "Taps" is an essential component of the burial ritual, as is the skirling of bag pipes, adopted by police and fire departments to commemorate their fallen. It should also be noted that some rock music, with its often subversive, antiestablishment, counterculture lyrics and performance practices, can play an important role, especially in adolescence and early adulthood (transitional developmental stages that entail the relinquishing of previously held self-object representations), in providing a Kohutian-like mirroring and affirmation of experience, and in serving to lessen feelings of isolation or alienation. Here music contains and assuages overwhelming affects and thus can serve a consoling function similar to that of more conventional mourning music.

A CLINICAL VIGNETTE

Mr. M. is in his thirties, married with a latency-age child. He is a professional musician, highly accomplished on several instruments and much in demand as a freelance player. His presenting complaints included deep frustration at his inability to feel a sense of ownership regarding his considerable professional successes, and the recognition that he relates to the world, and in particular toward those close to him,

with intense anxiety and dis-ease. While trained as a jazz musician—like his father—he feels unable to improvise; put any piece of music in front of him and he will quickly and easily master it, but he becomes paralyzed if he attempts to spontaneously deviate from the score. This, in essence, is the leitmotif of his life.

He is neither alexithymic nor anhedonic, per se, but he does not readily display or admit to feeling passion, zest, or anger. He acknowledges an intellectualized understanding of the possibility of anger but admits the feeling itself is absent; not surprisingly, his projections about others, and his fantasy life generally, tend to be suffused with narratives of aggression and hostility. His fervent wish to feel emotionally liberated and more improvisatory rapidly became the overarching metaphor of his treatment. Speaking in musical language (something I conveyed in our interactions that I understood), he expressed a longing to modulate out of C major and, in the jargon of jazz, use some really "out" chords.

Like ripples emanating from a rock dropped into water, Mr. M.'s entire life has been, and in many respects continues to be, shaped by his mother's suicide when he was seven years old, and by the subsequent—and tragic—ways his ability to mourn was curtailed and disallowed within the context of a family order too quickly reconfigured by his father's remarriage within months of his mother's death. His memory of the day of her death is vivid: after school one day he was whisked to a neighbor's house. There he found his father—a man I came to know through my patient as undemonstrative, sarcastic, emotionally parsimonious, controlled, and opaque—sobbing deeply. Mr. M. recalls that his own response was to laugh spontaneously and wildly. It is for him a moment now as fixed as if in a museum diorama, viewable through a pane of glass but otherwise static, untouchable, and devoid of life. The psychological residue that endures for him most dominantly is shame: he is certain his response of laughter was fantastically inappropriate.

The case of Mr. M. comports meaningfully with Deutsch's assessment (1937) of individuals whose reaction to the loss of a loved object is an apparent absence of grief. She asserts that "unmanifested grief must find expression to the full in some way or other" (p. 75) and that "as long as the early libidinal or aggressive attachments persist, the painful affect continues to flourish and, vice versa, the attachments are unresolved as long as the affective process of mourning has not been accomplished" (p. 84). In her view, the seemingly "heartless" phenomenon of indifference that children can display following the death of a

loved one may occur because "the ego of the child is not sufficiently developed to bear the strain of the work of mourning and . . . therefore utilizes some mechanism of narcissistic self-protection to circumvent the process" (pp. 75–76). The most extreme expression of these mechanisms is the omission of affect. Of Mr. M.'s few remaining memories of his mother, nearly all of them, as he says, are "not happy." In his memory she is an overemotional, hysterical, mercurially self-involved mother; these fading and negatively tinged memories are Mr. M.'s only remaining link to her. For him they are locked, as Feder (1981) describes nostalgia, the longing for a past forever lost, "in the amber of mental function, [where] the present is like a foreign body, and the processes of change which have forged the present are painfully threatening to the integrity of the mental representation" (p. 237).

This comports also with Wolfenstein's observations (1966) that children's defensive warding off of the reality of profound loss involves not a gradual decathexis but rather an intensification of cathexis to the object. There is an intolerance of protracted suffering—a "short sadness span," she calls it—the presenting effect of which is a reversal of affects, good for bad, founded in the fantasy that "if one does not feel bad, then nothing bad has happened" (p. 101).

Over the course of several years, Mr. M. and I explored the many unconscious possibilities of that historic, emotionally charged moment: That his laughter was an eruption of unbridled joy in finally encountering a feeling, expressive father. That it was a child's whoop of glee at the fulfillment of the sadistic wish for the "bad" mother's removal, in keeping with Deutsch's suggestion (1937) that an absence of grief may be the result of previously existing conflict with the lost object (p. 84). That it was simply an expression of what he was feeling in that moment, unhinged from a stark reality he was unable to integrate. That the recollection itself is in essence a "trauma screen" (Krystal 1978), constituted of numerous displacements, condensations, repressions, and transformations. That the primary process vocalization of a laugh was joined to the idea of laughter (when one laughs and why) by secondary revision, but in that moment was an utterance of profound shock, an idea in conceptual line with Jacobson's comments (1946, 1957) regarding the close similarity of gaiety and sadness.

These hypotheses are ultimately overshadowed by the experiential reality of Mr. M.'s psychological scars, the gristled tissue of which enduringly shapes his experience of the world. Of greatest relevance to

the present discussion is his choice of music as a profession, as well as his relationship with music itself. In my view, all music is for him a form of mourning music, in its fully embodying, aesthetically and psychologically, the component elements of the major traumas and unresolved conflicts of his early life; it is a language shared with his father, from which his mother is excluded. Music is the form in which the deep dread of his inappropriately expressing himself is ineluctably repeated. Also repeated are conflictual and negative feelings rooted in the differing tempi of mourning in his family (Wolfenstein 1966), where he found himself out of phase with his father, and probably his siblings as well, in reacting to their shared loss. In perfect accord with the tenets of the repetition compulsion, he abhors practicing and, despite a consciously asserted need to be overprepared and in absolute command, in fact he rarely does more than the minimum and thus invariably feels terrified—and certain—that his failings will be glaringly displayed. For him, bad things come from not being good, a formula that bears witness to his guilt-riddled belief, not uncommon among children of suicide, that he was at fault for his mother's despair (or was inadequate to the task of helping her).

Music, then, is the voice through which he exclaims a morbid fear that incessantly asserts itself via his idealization of perfect intonation and note-perfect performances, and his projected beliefs about others' condemnation of him for what he imagines is his unavoidable inadequacy and inappropriateness. Perhaps most significant, however, is music's multiple function, as both an actual and a symbolic mechanism by which his experience of reality—the vibrant realness of music sounded in the present, which, as an experience inextricably linked with the measurable passage of time, consequently delineates the yawning chasm separating his life from his mother's death—can be manipulated, preserved, or disavowed, as demanded by the jagged edges of his ambivalent ties to her.

THE PLASTICITY OF TIME

And so we take up again our discussion of the unique properties of music that lend themselves to the symbolic representation and communication of the constellation of affects connected with mourning and trauma. Perhaps the most distinctive of those features is, in a word, time.

Music, unlike the visual, is abstract, intangible, and ethereal, disappearing, reverberation and echoes aside, no sooner than it is created. Technology can defeat the natural decay of sound—consider the development of recording devices that can capture and preserve it—and this can provide a calming semblance of permanence. But this does not really reverse its evaporation, or resolve the paradox that sound is an integral, essential part of the physical world that nonetheless lacks concreteness or mass. In this, music mirrors many fantasies about life and death, repealing the wishes of psychic reality for immortality or resurrection, even while introducing an unavoidable reminder, at once painful and pleasurable, of life's fragility and impermanence.

Of music's constitutive elements, the most significant is time. According to Debussy, music is "rhythmicized time." The preponderance of music in the Western classical canon—tonal music of the European tradition until approximately the introduction of serialism at the turn of the twentieth century—is "discursive," to employ Suzanne Langer's word (1957), meaning that its formal structure unfolds successively in real time, like a narrative. This forward-moving narrative can spontaneously evoke regressive associative responses that in the mind of the listener can seem to skew, compress, expand, reverse, stop, or defy time. This plasticity of time, trenchantly defined by Rose (1992), "is the experience of the movement of lived time made audible" (p. 156). Music listening, a psychological-auditory event, occurs in the present and, like our perceptions of time itself, moves the present toward the future; but it can also seem to stand still, and can associatively be linked to an earlier time (Stein 2004).

These temporal aspects of music and traumatic experience are closely related. Pollock (1971) suggests that "psychological time is private, personal, subjective, and experiential" (p. 453); according to Stolorow (2003), "trauma destroys time" (p. 158). In his evocative elucidation of psychic trauma, Krystal (1978) draws a correlation between infantile traumatic reactions and aesthetic depictions of horrifying situations, suggesting that "all descriptions of hell try to represent this terrible state [of the overwhelmed child] and its timelessness. The feeling conveyed by the church description of the tortures of hell that go on forever and ever is matched by the reaction of persons in pain. Physical or mental pain can engender a regression to the infantile state wherein the sufferer loses the sense of time" (pp. 146–147).

The links are further illuminated by a consideration of rhythm, particularly the gentle swaying or rocking motions used in calming a distressed infant. Fetal and infant life are dominated by the rhythms of the body—mother's and child's alike—and these enteroceptive, kinesthetic, and biorhythmic experiences are no doubt vestigially retained and resurrected in later life, perhaps most especially in moments of duress when the mind might regressively dissociate to a primitive developmental state when an abstract sense of time has yet to be consolidated. Cradle-like rocking, and other lulling mechanisms associated with early life, as well as such later derivatives as slow, rhythmic counting used to quell anger or fear, are thus often used for self-soothing during traumatic or painful events. Similarly, apprehension of time, both conceptual and sensory, is frequently distorted when there is a traumatic breach of the stimulus barrier. There will often be a discontinuity between the sense of time experienced and time remembered, as well as significant alterations to perceptions of duration; spans of time can seem compressed or expanded, accelerated, decelerated, or stopped entirely (Stein 2004).

Music's discursive narrativism engenders a sense of time's passage, of a traveling away from now toward some moment hence. Even a retrograde figure (as in a fugue where a thematic subject is reintroduced in reverse), an Escher-like contrivance used to convince our ears that the end precedes the beginning, nonetheless engages our perception of an unraveling toward a conclusion, not a regressive implosion backward. But, as I am proposing here, music, in transforming our perceptual and sensory experience of time, can serve complexly defensive or coping functions: it can provoke a heightened anticipation of a future moment; induce or relax states of tension; seem to suspend time's ineluctable forward movement; or, perhaps most relevant here, affectively evoke temporally distant events or reminiscences from the past.

In states of mourning or in the wake of a traumatic disturbance, then, music can function analogously with the latent wish underlying the dream work, serving as a creative solution to a traumatic reality. From this perspective, the text and music of Mahler's *Resurrection* Symphony—to recall the example I cited earlier—can be more clearly understood as the unconscious expression of Reik's wish for his beloved mentor's return—his resurrection—and to thereby reverse the reality of the loss: "You will rise again, my dust, after a short rest; / Immortal life will He grant who called." That Reik reports his conscious

experience of the musical hallucination as "intrusive" and of little initial solace does not contradict this understanding. Rather, it speaks to the presence of inner conflict between an ego function (recognition of the reality of loss) and unconscious fantasy (resurrection), which is symbolically ensconced within a framework of rhythm, sound, and text. This is in keeping with what Loewald (1988) supposes are certain "magical" qualities of art, "connected with the achievement of a reconciliation—with the return, on a higher level of organization, to the early magic of thought, gesture, word, image, emotion, fantasy, as they become united again with what in ordinary nonmagical experience they only reflect, recollect, represent, or symbolize" (pp. 80–81).

The mind's ear is a fertile locus of interior listening where mental functioning can be translated into conjured sound having symbolic significance. We can now focus on the consoling properties of music, its ability to provide a meaningful sense of solace.

CONSOLATION

The concept of consolation, as I have said, is surprisingly underdeveloped in the psychoanalytic literature. Although the word *consolation* (and such variants as *console, consoling,* and the like) appears with some frequency, no article is devoted to defining its meaning and usage, or exploring the clinical and theoretical contours of the concept.

How might this omission in the literature be accounted for? What might a paucity of writing on the topic suggest about theoretical attitudes and technical approaches regarding grief-stricken or traumatized patients? Answering these questions and redressing the lack are beyond the scope of this paper, and I will defer a fuller accounting. I propose instead to confine this preliminary exploration, following some general explanatory remarks, to a discussion of the consolatory properties specific to music.

In the main, *consolation* appears to be used almost colloquially, in a wide array of contexts, as if there were some tacit, consensual meaning that applies in all instances. Setting the stage for this loosely defined usage, Freud (1917) himself uses the word *console,* appropriately enough in the first paragraph of "Mourning and Melancholia," entreating his readers that "we will have to console ourselves" (p. 243)—meaning, it would seem, both Freud's readers and his superego—with

regard to his inability to establish the empirical validity of his theorizing beyond a limited number of cases. It seems plausible to assume, in any event, that Freud's use of the word in that context was not consciously intended to link mourning and consolation as components of a biphasic process.

Despite the absence of any codified psychoanalytic formulation of consolation, a review of the term's use in the literature, the psychoanalytic treatment of traumatized and bereaved individuals, and personal observation and experience suggest that it can be broadly if superficially understood to imply something (or someone) that provides or offers reparation, repair, or relief from discomfort; safety, the satiation of a hunger, or the assuaging of unpleasure; or transcendence, oneness, symbiotic reunion, peace, or support.

To recognize and appropriately attend to a requirement for consolation is an imaginative inference predicated on a concordant attunement involving self-awareness, self-knowledge, and experience sufficient for at least a rudimentary, approximately congruent appreciation of another's subjective experience and its dynamic relation to past and present life circumstances. My proposal, which follows from that, is that the underpinnings of consolation are closely related to the capacity for empathy and are perhaps even predominantly derivative of it. If this is so, consolation may as a concept have been largely subsumed within the voluminous literature on empathy. This hypothesis would account, at least in part, for the apparent dearth of writing about it. But while empathy is both too broad and too established a concept to warrant a survey of those writings here, a few words are in order to illuminate this idea.

Schafer (1959) defines empathy as the "inner experience of sharing in and comprehending the momentary psychological state of another person [in] a hierarchic organization of desires, feelings, thoughts, defenses, controls, superego pressures, capacities, self-representations and representations of real and fantasied personal relationships" (p. 345). Buie (1981) considers that "empathy begins with the perception of oftentimes subtle cues from the patient, then proceeds intrapsychically in the analyst through a particular coordinated use of certain mental abilities, that is, memory, fantasy, and awareness of his own feelings and impulses" (p. 282). In empathy, according to Reik (1937), we share the experience of others "not *like* our own but *as* our own" (cited in Schafer 1959, p. 342). I term this entire perceptual constellation *empathic imagination.*

But what of the connection between mourning and consolation? Freud (1917) regarded mourning as "the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one" (p. 243). The distinguishing features of such profound loss would include feelings of pain, a loss of interest in the world, and, relatedly, a diminished capacity to adopt a replacement object for the one lost. The work (or, more accurately, the process) of mourning inaugurates on this view an intense struggle giving rise to a compromise solution: an internal hallucinatory process in which the lost object is in essence kept alive in the mind.

A number of contemporary bereavement theorists question whether the conceptual contours of mourning have yet been definitively surveyed; several propose extensive modifications to Freud's monolithic though incomplete model of mourning. In keeping with this evolving perspective, Blum (1983) observes that "the adaptive social and cultural responses to object loss are perhaps as variable as the vicissitudes of human imagination" (p. 310).

Bowlby (1961) remarks along similar lines that "what is impressive about mourning is not only the number and variety of response systems which are engaged but the way in which they tend to conflict with one another. Loss of a loved object gives rise not only to an intensified desire for reunion but to hatred of the object and, later, to detachment from it; it gives rise not only to a cry for help but to a rejection of those who respond to it. No wonder it is painful to experience and difficult to understand" (p. 322).

While acknowledging this multiplicity of mournful expressions and concomitant idiosyncratic meanings (which includes an apparent absence of expression, as seen in the case of Mr. M.), nearly all psychoanalytic writers on mourning concur that pained expressions of grief (or sorrow or anguish or despair), frequently accompanied by weeping, are linked to the overwhelming urge, no matter how ambivalent, to regain the lost object. In this sense, grief is taken to be a primitive appeal to others for assistance. It is from this perspective that Rado (1928) characterized melancholia as "a great despairing cry for love" (cited in Bowlby 1961, p. 319).

Acceptance of the death of a cherished object can unleash an unbearable regressive panic state marked chiefly by the resurrection of feelings of absolute aloneness rooted in infancy. Part of the confoundingly complex process of mourning, then, hinges on being able to trans-

form this excruciating experience—a brutal decathexis—into an "invaluable adaptive function" that eventually enables the mourner to "separate memory from hope" by liberating libido once bound to the lost object and making it available to other relations and sublimated activities (Wolfenstein 1966, p. 93).

In my view, this titanic intrapsychic struggle informs many beliefs and rituals surrounding death and loss, such as those involving the afterlife, to which I alluded earlier. In this regard, I have suggested elsewhere (Stein and Sabbadini 2001) that "the wish underlying any notion of an afterlife is the maintenance of a link to other people, or, rather, to the internalized objects which furnish our memories. This, by definition, defies death; in the absence of contact or interaction with others, memories, hopes, dreams, even hallucinations, are the surrogate nutrients which sustain us" (p. 606). I also proposed conceiving of the afterlife in the context of a psychosexual developmental line, distinguishing between "death" and "afterlife" as an interpretation of the processes of separation-individuation that Mahler, Pine, and Bergman (1975) call "psychological birth." The child's emerging sense of self, as other than the mother, brings a loss of cherished symbiotic fusion—a sort of death—even as it heralds existence outside the maternal orbit—life/afterlife. Of related significance is the fantasy of immortality, which, Sabbadini (1989) argues, concerns "unconscious timelessness and the infantile temporal dimension of the omnipresent" (p. 312; see also Pollock 1971, 1975b).

Let me refocus on the relation between consolation and empathy. I situate consolation within the sphere of mourning, as the second sequential component in a biphasic process—the reply to a call. Consolation can provide a significant counterpoint, and in certain circumstances even an antidote, to the reactions of disconnection and painful feelings of desolation or isolation that typically accompany such familiar components of mourning as ego withdrawal and depletion. It is thus, ideally, restitutive and reconstructive.

But it can be a delicate balance to attune and regulate an interaction providing "good enough" consolation. In line with Bolognini's useful distinction between empathy and "empathism" (1997), it must be stressed that the use of empathy, no less than sympathy and consolation, must be especially complex and nuanced in the context of grief, mourning, and trauma. While it may generally be agreed that consolation can be experienced as alleviating or assuaging painful feelings,

bereaved or traumatized individuals often experience attempts to console as intrusive or burdensome. Though surely a mourner may throw up unconscious defenses against the acceptance of consolation, frequently the consoler's efforts mask a narcissistic need to suppress or eradicate the traumatic affect in the other (for example, with platitudes intended to provide assurance and comfort). Often they engage in what Bolognini describes as the dogmatic application of a hyperconcordant attitude or posture—"empathism." This would of course be a gross failure of empathic imagination in that, paradoxically, the one in distress is in effect called on to assist the consoler—for example, by being asked to detail what can be done or given to provide consolation: "How can I help you?" "Tell me what you need." These questions are more often than not impossible to answer in moments of severe distress, an idea epitomized in Wolfenstein's apothegm "Hated are the comforters" (1966, p. 99, n. 5). An analogy is the inconsolable infant whose frenzied thrashing and crying seem at every turn to frustrate the ministrations of its caregiver, but who nonetheless is asked to still itself so that it may cooperate in being calmed!

MUSIC AND CONSOLATION

The consolatory properties of music can be understood to serve compound defensive, sublimatory, and coping functions. Music can be employed by the ego in its adaptive reorganizational response to loss. In its abstractness, its concordant approximation in sound of wordless primary process experience, its malleability in time, and its psychosomatic evocations of well-attuned aspects of the infant-mother symbiosis, music stands distinct among the art forms—indeed perhaps in the entire human repertoire of communicative gestures—in conveying grief-related affects.

Its rhythmic and harmonic structure is uniquely able to transform our perceptual and sensory experience of time to evoke temporally distant events or reminiscences, provoke a heightened or accelerated anticipation of a future moment, induce or relax states of tension, or seem altogether to suspend time's ineluctable forward movement.

In this sense, music can be understood to function like paradigmatic dreams, which recapitulate elements of primary relationships and experiences in seeming defiance of time, and by which the dreamer attempts to reverse or master trauma, or to alter or disavow a too

painful reality. Analogous to the latent wish underlying the dream work, music in mourning proposes a creative solution to an intolerable reality (and its consequent affects). One way, then, in which music consoles—and with such satisfaction—is in temporarily relieving or diminishing feelings of pain by providing an illusory response ensconced in rhythm and sound to the dominant wish of the bereaved—reunion with the lost object.

Our relationship with music fosters a restructuring of emotional experience, especially during periods in which trauma and sorrow have created a world experienced as fragmented, disorganized, isolating, distemperate, or monochromatic. Mourning music, from this perspective, can be understood to temporarily recuperate or restabilize certain ego functions, which further speaks to its special ability to provide succor.

From this it follows, though the attendant complexities of the empathic interaction must be recognized, that the chief consolatory element of music is its ability to foster self-empathy, circumventing the painful difficulties associated with empathistic—which is to say, insufficiently attuned—efforts by others to offer consolation. Music listening, as I conceive it here, is a creative internalization of the properly attuned and regulated self-other interaction. The "right" piece of music listened to at the right moment can only be "just right." To extrapolate from Bollas's idea of the transformational object (1987), music listening invokes an imaginative resurrection of an internalized other (not only the dead or absent other). The work of music can thus itself be conceived as a responsive object. This, as Bollas suggests, is a "pre-verbal, essentially pre-representational registration of the mother's presence" (p. 39) and will thus facilitate a restitutive transformation of internal experience and affect; we feel held, understood, consoled. The rapport and fusion experienced with the music catalyzes a sense of ecstatic reverence or utter calm, of unity, transcendence, or peace. Music is capable of fostering (or instilling) the definitive experiential qualities of consolation.

Music can also, as in the case of Mr. M., be a means of adjusting and controlling the tempo of a world that has left one reeling and disoriented. Or it might be a sublimatory avenue taken during the course of the mourning process, this last being especially pertinent where the mourner is a creative person purposefully employing the act of composition to represent, communicate, or work through his or her feelings of grief. The creative act of composition (or of listening), Feder (1993) has suggested, "must be viewed as a multifaceted psychic compromise

which inevitably includes unconscious as well as conscious elements" (p. 14). An apt example, though not musical, can be found in Freud's 1908 preface to the second edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900): "For this book has a further subjective significance for me personally—a significance which I only grasped after I had completed it. It was, I found, a portion of my own self-analysis, my reaction to my father's death—that is to say, to the most important event, the most poignant loss, of a man's life. Having discovered that this was so, I felt unable to obliterate the traces of the experience" (p. xxvi).

Additionally, music can function as a surrogate or auxiliary cry or wail, an externalization of an intolerably overwhelming, incomprehensible, or crushing internal state. It can give voice to feelings otherwise inexpressible, to the vast zone of overwhelming affect for which spoken and written language may be inadequate, in essence speaking for the self obliterated or muted by despair, or symbolizing experiences and affects otherwise too intense or overwhelming to express directly.

It is one of the great paradoxes of art that in both form and content it can simultaneously represent two contradictory aspects of mental existence. In music listening, the regressive, formless, oceanic experience of aesthetic rapture—by definition an internal and solitary experience—can powerfully instill a sense of external connectedness with important others, as part of a community of other mourners, as well as in fantasy, internally resurrecting or creating a link to the lost object.

CODA

Writing this paper has been part of my own working through, still ongoing, of the aftershocks of September 11. I consider it fitting that once my interior silence abated and music finally returned as a part of life for and in me, the piece I heard first was Bach's *Goldberg Variations.* The variations, of course, end with the beginning, with a verbatim restatement of the aria with which the work commences, a bracketing by twin musical towers. The symmetry is mathematically beautiful, and the emotional effect, for me, perfect in the phantasmagorically magical way that only a dream can be perfect, in simultaneously yet impossibly allowing and denying the forward passage of time, and in being both heartrendingly desolate and exquisitely revitalizing, both mournful and consoling. As I frantically wound my way downtown toward home that horrible morning against a tidal wave of

hysterical, numb, ash-covered people streaming uptown, nothing I was seeing or experiencing truly registered; it was all too incomprehensible and unimaginable to be real. None of it seemed even remotely possible. These words notwithstanding, there are no words for the experience.

For me, then, this piece of music—a work composed, so legend has it, as a soporific for an insomniac[5]—is an aesthetic bit of undoing, the answer to my wish that time loop back and make everything as it was before. This, I believe, gestures toward an answer to the question of music's unique and remarkable capacity both to convey grief and to provide solace in its wake.

REFERENCES

ABERBACH, D. (1989). Creativity and the survivor: The struggle for mastery. *International Review of Psychoanalysis* 16:273–286.

BLUM, H. (1983). Splitting of the ego and its relation to parent loss. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 31(Suppl.):301–324.

BOLLAS, C. (1987). *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known.* New York: Columbia University Press.

BOLOGNINI, S. (1997). Empathy and 'empathism'. *International Journal Psychoanal*ysis 78:279–293.

BOWLBY, J. (1961). Processes of mourning. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 42:317–340.

BUIE, D. (1981). Empathy: Its nature and limitations. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 29:281–307.

DEUTSCH, H.(1937). Absence of grief. In *The World of Emotions: Clinical Studies of Affects and Their Expression,* ed. C.W. Socarides. New York: International Universities Press, 1977, pp. 73–85.

FEDER, S. (1981). The nostalgia of Charles Ives: An essay in affects and music. In *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Music (First Series),* ed. S. Feder, R.L. Karmel, & G. Pollock. New York: International Universities Press, 1990, pp. 233–266.

——— (1993). Promissory notes: Method in music and applied psychoanalysis. In *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Music (Second Series),* ed. S. Feder, R.L. Karmel, & G. Pollock. Madison, CT: International Universities Press, pp. 3–19.

——— (2004). Music as simulacrum of mental life. Paper presented to the

[5]The apocryphal account of the variations' origin is that in 1742 Bach was commissioned by Count Kaiserling, Russian ambassador to the Saxon Court, to compose a work that a musician in his service, Johann Gottlieb Goldberg, also one of Bach's students, could play to help him fall asleep. The truth of this tale is unlikely. Still, one can appreciate how the Aria—with which the work begins and ends—might foster a sense of presomnambulistic timelessness.

American Psychoanalytic Association, New York, January.
FREUD, S. (1900). The interpretation of dreams. *Standard Edition* 4/5.
——— (1917). Mourning and melancholia. *Standard Edition* 14:239–260.
HAGMAN, G. (1995). Mourning: A review and reconsideration. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 76:909–925.
JACOBSON, E. (1946). The child's laughter: Theoretical and clinical notes on the function of the comic. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 2:39–60.
——— (1957). Normal and pathological moods: Their nature and functions. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 12:73–113.
KRYSTAL, H. (1978). Trauma and affect. In *Integration and Self-Healing Affect: Trauma and Alexithymia.* Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 1993, pp. 137–169.
LANGER, S.(1957). *Philosophy in a New Key.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
LAUB, D., & PODELL, D. (1995). Art and trauma. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 76:995–1005.
LOEWALD, H. (1988). *Sublimation.* New Haven: Yale University Press.
MAHLER, M., PINE, F., & BERGMAN, A. (1975). *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant: Symbiosis and Individuation.* New York: Basic Books.
NASS, M. (1975). On hearing and inspiration in the composition of music. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 44:431–449.
NOY, P. (1979). Form creation in art: An ego psychological approach to creativity. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 48:229–256.
——— (1993). How music conveys emotion. In *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Music (Second Series),* ed. S. Feder, R.L. Karmel, & G. Pollock. Madison, CT: International Universities Press, pp. 125–149.
POLLOCK, G.H. (1971). On time, death, and immortality. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 40:435–446.
——— (1975a). Mourning and memorialization through music. In *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Music (First Series),* ed. S. Feder, R.L. Karmel, & G. Pollock. New York: International Universities Press, 1990, pp. 195–208.
——— (1975b). On mourning, immortality, and utopia. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 23:334–362.
PRATT, C. (1952). *Music and the Language of Emotion.* Washington, DC: U.S. Library of Congress.
RADO, S. (1928). The problem of melancholia. In *The World of Emotions: Clinical Studies of Affects and Their Expression,* ed. C.W. Socarides. New York: International Universities Press, 1977, pp. 9–27.
REIK, T. (1937). *Surprise and the Psychoanalyst.* New York: Dutton.
——— (1953). *The Haunting Melody: Psychoanalytic Experiences in Life and Music.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Young.
ROBERTSON, A. (1968). *Requiem: Music of Mourning and Consolation.* New

York: Praeger.

ROSE, G. (1992). *The Power of Form: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Aesthetic Form.* Madison, CT: International Universities Press.

SABBADINI, A. (1989). Boundaries of timelessness: Some thoughts about the temporal dimension of the psychoanalytic space. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 70:305–313.

SCHAFER, R. (1959). Generative empathy in the treatment situation. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 28:342–373.

SIGGINS, L. (1966). Mourning: A critical survey of the literature. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 47:14–25.

STEIN, A. (2004). Music and trauma in Polanski's 'The Pianist'. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 85:755–765.

——— & SABBADINI, A. (2001). Just choose one: Memory and time in Koreeda's 'Wandafuru raifu' [afterlife]. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 82:603–608.

STOLOROW, R.D. (2003). Trauma and temporality. *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 20:158–161.

STROZIER, C.B. (2002). The World Trade Center disaster and its global aftermath: Reflections and meditations. Paper delivered at FEMA Conference on Urban Hazards, John Jay College Center on Terrorism and Public Safety. <http://www.nycop.com/Stories/Jan_02/The_World_Trade_Center_Disaste/body_the_world_trade_center_disaste.html>

WHITE, T. (1983). A man out of time beats the clock (interview with Elvis Costello). *Musician,* October.

WOLFENSTEIN, M. (1966). How is mourning possible? *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 21:93–123.

80 Fifth Avenue
Suite 901
New York, NY 10011
E-mail: psykhe@att.net