

THEORY II: BEYOND WISH AND DEFENSE

CLASS 9

IDEALIZING RELATIONSHIPS AND CHARISMATIC GROUP FORMATION

Aim: The purpose of this class is to explore the mechanism of the projection of the critical agency, the conditions under which this projection occurs, and the charismatic object relations that result.

Reading: Freud S (1921): *Group Formation and the Analysis of the Ego*. SE 18: 65-144.

We have seen that the term "melancholia" refers to a particular form of a self-self relationship in which a criticizing, idealized, overseer rails against the self. The projection outwards of this critical agency results in certain characteristic group formations (a subject to which Freud devoted himself in our reading for this week) and (since a one-on-one relationship is merely a dyadic group) object relations. This form of relationship is particularly important in its implications for the transference and forms one of the "idealizing" transference-like structures of which Kohut speaks. In reading what follows, it would be helpful to keep in mind the ways in which the work of the analyst resembles (and is different from) that of the conductor.

TOSCANINI'S RELATION TO HIS ORCHESTRA

Arturo Toscanini was regarded, by judges not otherwise given to extravagance, as "the towering musical genius of [our] time" who "will always stand alone [because] he was greater than anyone else" (Merrill, 1965). His impact was such that he was considered less a supremely gifted musician than "a miracle, a force of nature" (Schonberg, 1967). During his lifetime he was idolized in ways reminiscent of cult-worship; he left behind an impression that he was unique, that "there will never be another one like him - not in our time" (Gingold, 1967) and, twenty-five years after his death, he remained "the apex, the top of what a conductor should be" (Hart, 1980).

His hallmarks were the long and aristocratic phrase, the stupendous climax, the gracious melody, and, above all, the timing and intensity that gave his music a unique tensile quality. Even his recordings, although they are now approaching technical obsolescence, still stand as benchmarks against which propulsive drive, searing passion, intellectual grasp and perfection of execution may be measured. In a record review more than a quarter-century after his death, two recordings

of a work were recommended because they came "closest to Toscanini in conveying the overall sweep and passion of the score, as well as its delicacy" and were therefore "first choices among modern recordings" (Canarina, 1981).

It is important to emphasize that he was not a musician in the ordinary sense: he neither composed nor performed. He functioned by guiding, inspiring, and educating the players and singers who actually made the music. The medium in which he worked, his counterpart to the painter's oils or the poet's language, was his relation to his players, his capacity to mold them into a group of well-functioning musicians.

Every artist transmits "the meaning inherent in the work of art from its origin [in his own mind] to its final destiny, the deepest layer of the mind of the consumer" (Noy, 1979). For a conductor, the orchestra-musicians are both the consumers and the raw materials of that art. The conductor performs *for* the players so that *out of them* music can be made. There is abundant testimony to the enormous impact Toscanini had on those with whom he worked. It is said that no conductor in history demanded and got such "unearthly precision" and such a wide range of dynamics from an orchestra; "his players played for him as they did for no other conductor" (Schonberg, 1967). It was in the exercise of his capacity "to completely exalt, to inspire every orchestra he conducted to outdo itself...that Toscanini's genius shone most brilliantly" (Antek, 1963).

Charisma and Group Leadership

The concept of *charisma* as a special quality of leadership that inspires unswerving allegiance and devotion was first elaborated by the sociologist Max Weber who named it after a theological term which refers to a gift such as the ability to speak in tongues or to do miracles (it is equivalent, in Weber's usage, to Le Bon's term *prestige*). The charismatic relationship is marked by a special quality of love for the leader marked by total devotion and a sense of the uncanny or extraordinary when it comes to identifying the source of the leader's power. The charismatic leader is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. Charismatic domination breaks all traditional norms and results in a radical alteration of attitudes and behavior. The conditions under which a human being comes to be regarded as the incarnation of or the conduit for the more than human were explored by Freud in his study of group dynamics, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. It is above all a special type of love relationship based on the projection of the *über Ich*, after which the follower perceives his own love returning in the form of an uncanny attraction. The illusion that the leader loves all of the individuals in the group equally and justly is simply an idealistic remodelling of the fact that they are equally persecuted by him and equally fear him.

Freud postulated that by this means the group-leader took over the role that had been previously played by the group-member's own standards, norms, and values. The leader alone is free, only his intellectual acts are strong and independent, only his will autonomous (without the need for reinforcement from others). His ego has few libidinal ties, he loves no one but himself, or other

people only in so far as they serve his needs. He is of a masterful nature, narcissistic, self-confident and independent. To the group he offers a chance at the realization of deeply cherished values in exchange for submissiveness and awe. The acceptance of this offer establishes the leader as an externalized part of the follower's mental apparatus: follower and leader together being necessary to perform a function (regulation of self-esteem through union with the mandated self) which the follower had previously been able to do alone.

Being in love is a state in which the object draws a part of the subject's narcissistic ego-libido onto itself. *Hypnosis* resembles being in love in being limited to two persons, but it is based entirely on sexual impulsions that are aim-inhibited and puts the object in the place of the ego ideal. The group leader is like the hypnotist, there is something uncanny in the relationship to him. He possesses a mysterious power (a *mana*) which makes it dangerous to approach him. He manifests this power by telling the subject to look him in the eyes; he hypnotizes by his look. He makes the subject concentrate his whole attention upon the hypnotist, thereby creating an attitude of *rapport*. Group membership (like the joke) serves to check the distributions of certain mental energies that would interfere with the course of events in the unconscious. Freud agrees with Ferenczi that there are two modes of hypnosis, one soothing, the other threatening. By one or the other of these means, the hypnotist

awakens in the subject a portion of his archaic heritage which had also made him compliant towards his parents ... what is thus awakened is the idea of a paramount and dangerous personality, towards whom only a passive-masochistic attitude is possible, to whom one's will has to be surrendered, - while to be alone with him, "to look him in the face", appears a hazardous enterprise ... As we know from other reactions, individuals have preserved a variable degree of personal aptitude for reviving old situations of this kind.

Freud emphasizes that the libidinal structure of groups leads us back to the distinction between the ego and the ego ideal and to the twofold tie which this makes possible - identification, and putting the object in the place of the ego ideal. The mind of the child, subject to the endless demands arising from the somatic apparatus during the epigenetic sequence of developmental stages, floridly produces wishes and fantasies in excess of those permitted fulfillment by the environment. The frustration and punishment of these desires is a source of pain that forces the child to prune the luxuriant growth of his wish-systems to the relatively restricted, displaced, and aim-inhibited forms which become the acceptable contents of the adult ego. The representations of the objects that inflict these painful experiences are internalized as a differentiating grade within the ego, and become the *über Ich*, the inhibiting and prohibiting organ of the psychic apparatus. Freud introduced the *über Ich* into his psychology with the remark that it was the "last great salvage operation for the infantile narcissism" (Freud, 1923). There is always a feeling of triumph when something in the ego coincides with the *über Ich*, such moments are "a magnificent festival for the ego." This is the groundwork for experiences of ecstatic joy when the demands of the group leader are met.

Idealization of the Leader

The importance of this experience of joy (and its derivatives) is seen in those cases in which, despite the internalization of a full set of standards, norms, goals and values, there results only emptiness and loss of self-esteem when these precepts are obeyed (the case of Mr. A; Kohut, 1971). This indicates that the *über Ich* is not always an effective salvage operation for the infantile narcissism, that internalization of a superego-like set of precepts is not synonymous with idealization of the deeds to which those precepts lead. Inability to endow one's own behavior with idealized qualities inevitably entails the search for an external object who will perform that function, with an accompanying loss of autonomy. Some individuals may appear morally intact, "intelligent, distinguished, and highly developed" and still lack initiative. They can do nothing by themselves, "the impulse to act [is] missing." It is only when they are involved in a charismatic relation that they become vitalized (Reich, 1940).

Needing an external, idealized figure to galvanize them causes them to disparage themselves as excessively dependent. In contrast, they admire and are fascinated by individuals who display some visible form of the God-complex, those self-absorbed individuals who seem totally independent, who do not need other people and who regard themselves as the embodiment of all perfection, (Jones, 1964). A grandiose individual appears to them to be the carrier of charisma and, in order to be close to such power, they will not only endure insults and humiliations but treasure this treatment as evidence of the superiority of the idealized object (Olden, 1941). As a result, there is a tendency for narcissistic and paranoid individuals to rise to positions of group leadership (Kernberg, 1979).

Obedience to such a figure becomes a secular analogue of piety, a means of acquiring value by surrendering to, and being dissolved in, a figure that is seen as having value. This lays the groundwork for a psychological state of bondage or enthrallment, an inner experience of being whole only when participating in the power of the other. Full participation, a complete giving up of oneself to the admired figure, becomes at once identification and the fulfillment of an ideal and results in a feeling of ecstatic triumph (Fenichel, 1939). These peak experiences of mystical union (*unio mystica*) are marked by states of pervasive empathy and can have the quality of a love-death: "The walls between [us] do not exist any more", goes one report, "I feel what he feels; I even think what he thinks. We are one person, and the only wish I have is to die that very minute" (Reich, 1940).

Childhood Preparation for Follower Status

The availability of an adult to respond to a charismatic figure in this way is prepared for by a childhood which mitigates against the internalization of those psychic structures which subserve autonomous regulation of self regard. If, for any one of a variety of reasons, a child continues to be treated past infancy primarily as the embodiment of what the parents were, are, or want to be, and if approval is available only for behavior which helps to maintain parental self-idealization, then any pattern in the child which does not do this will be either ignored or attacked.

Since the greatest part of the child's spontaneous behavior is firmly rooted in the child's own egoism and is therefore irrelevant to maintaining the parents' self-esteem, the mechanisms which mediate the child's autonomous activity can become firmly associated with loss of love and loss of approval. A child in such a family develops an attentive responsivity to the external cues which can indicate those patterns of conduct that will be idealized by the parent, those which will install the child as a distanced but not separated part of the parent's own self. The experience of pleasing the parent, and thereby receiving the needed acceptance and approval, is actually an experience of fusion (Brodey, 1965).

In these circumstances, fusion becomes not only a means to get certain desired experiences, but also a way of caring for the object. Fusion breaks down the distinctions between parent and child, it promotes a fluid interchange of roles. In catering to the need of the parent who depends for his own self-idealization on seeing his fantasies fulfilled in his child, the child becomes the psychological caretaker and protector of the parent. Every action, which fulfills the parental expectations, at the same time guards the parent against the pain of losing contact with his own ego ideal. This leaves the child with a permanent need to stabilize and cure an object by idealizing him (Rivière, 1936).

Grown to adulthood, personalities formed in this mold find themselves structured to require repetition of these formative experiences. Without them, they feel an unbearable separation from the ego ideal. They are thus prone to the development of the affect of depression (or its close correlate, boredom) with a concomitant loss of the ability to initiate activity (Bibring, 1953).

Family Dynamics of Certain Musicians

That family constellations productive of this psychological pattern are common in the background of many performing musicians is merely a reflection of the fact that it is precisely this kind of family which tends to propel a child with musical talent into the ranks of the professionals. Occasionally, an artist makes his way urged on by inner motivation or the exuberance of his own talent but, more commonly, the achievement of professional status reflects an intense relationship with a parent, of either sex, who personifies the well-known attributes of the "stage mother." The relations between Leopold Mozart and his son are paradigmatic of the intensity with which practice and performance can be invested as the vehicle of parent-child interaction. The parent who nurtures talent develops a fierce attachment that can erode or supplant the marital bond itself.

During his scholarship year in Paris, Freud was asked by his parents to look in on the wife and son of their family physician, a Dr. Kreisler. The boy, Fritz, had shown signs of violinistic talent and these had so engaged his mother that she had left the family to fend for itself in Vienna while she took him to Paris to pursue his studies. Freud noted that the abandoned father had the expenses of two households and the domestic pleasures of none and dourly suggested throttling

the infant prodigy (Jones, 1953).

A similar expression of paternal resentment emerged in the analysis of a musician who reported that he had begun to play, with his mother's encouragement, at the age of seven. By the time he was ten, his father had become liable to "violent outbursts, usually directed toward [the patient] and his music, after which the father would leave home, not to return for several days." Other themes which emerged in this case were the patient's conviction of his singular importance to his mother, his disillusionment with his father, his confusion about family roles (he could not tell "who was father and who was mother, who was husband and who was wife, who was child and who was spouse"), his recurrent fantasies of being the parent of his parents and the importance to him of being the "good boy who practiced" as a way of staying close to his mother in a non-sexual way. He had assuaged his childhood loneliness with long hours of practicing while he waited for his mother to return from work or shopping. Practicing meant, "having her there with him when he was alone" (Oremland, 1975).

A lonely childhood is often part of musical talent. Many performing musicians, particularly string and piano players, remember themselves as having been severely restricted by a ruthless parental determination to suppress all aspects of their development which were in competition with, or even merely irrelevant to, the development of technical proficiency. In one case, a career as a second violinist was closely related to an attempt to suppress anger at parental domination, a use of "pathological narcissism as substitute for ego strivings" (Wittenberg, 1980).

The demand of the parents for long hours of solitary practice sets up a vicious circle in which the parental commands enforce isolation from the peer-group and the absence of peer-group support reinforces the symbiotic ties to the parent, with subsequent crippling of capacities for socialization. If this is carried beyond a certain point, the talented youngster becomes incapable of doing anything but playing his instrument. It may be the extra measure of desperation deriving from this narrowing of the personality that, in many cases, enforces the choice to be a professional musician rather than a talented amateur.

The Dynamics of Orchestras

The presence of a certain percentage of individuals with this ingrained propensity to idealization gives a certain character to any orchestra, one that emerges most often in its negative manifestations. The childhood interdigitation between musical performance and the parents' shaping ideals, the ability to give emotional sustenance through technical mastery and the intense individual attention accorded the gifted child are in marked contrast to the humdrum emotional climate of the orchestra-players' daily work. Not only are they condemned to anonymity and to the stultifying repetition of a restricted stock of concert staples, they must frequently resign themselves to the acceptance of lackluster musical leadership. They become bored and resentful: "in an orchestra there are always some men who don't care ... who give just the bare minimum, just enough to get by" (Carboni, 1967).

Inspiration involves surrender to a power outside of oneself (Greenacre, 1963) and many conductors are incapable of eliciting their players' respect: "in a good fifty percent of performances the orchestra ... plays essentially better than the conductor conducts ... [the conductors] are not gifted enough; but then they pretend to be maestros" (Burghauser, 1967). This deprives the players of the stimuli and rewards around which their personalities were organized. Lacking enthusiasm or commitment, "[they] play with [their] head buried in the music, [they] see only by peripheral vision the beat going up and down, and as a result [they] fall in where [they] shouldn't, or [they] don't make the ritards where they are wanted" (Carboni, 1967). A story tells of the member of a London orchestra who, encountering a friend, volunteered that he had played the Eroica the previous night. "Who conducted?", asked the friend. "I don't know", responded the player, "I never looked up" (Marsh, 1956).

No player in any orchestra led by Toscanini ever made that statement.

Some Biographical Data

Arturo Toscanini had an extraordinarily long public career, beginning at 19 when he was dramatically thrust from his cellist's chair onto the podium of a South American production of *Aïda* and continuing past his 87th birthday when he gave his last public concert. In between, he was music director of La Scala, principal conductor of the Metropolitan Opera, again in charge of La Scala, conductor of the New York Philharmonic and finally conductor of his own orchestra, the N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra.

It is doubtful that his psychobiography will ever be written. He guarded his secrets closely, left no personal papers and was generally antagonistic to being written about. However, a few sketchy facts about his upbringing have become available (cf. Sacchi, 1957; Marsh, 1956; Marek, 1975; Sachs, 1978).

He was the child of Claudio Toscanini, an itinerant custom tailor. Claudio, the 26th and last child of a mill operator, had run away from home at 13 after irremediably wounding his father's dignity by flicking a handkerchief in his face. Claudio was a dreamy, romantic, impractical and unreliable man who impulsively decided to marry after having secretly enlisted for a third time for service in Garibaldi's army, so that he abandoned his wife directly after the wedding. On his return, he worked so intermittently that they lived in grinding poverty, fleeing from Parma to Genoa and back again to escape his creditors. His wife rapidly turned into a grim and hard-bitten woman: harried, abrupt and unaffectionate. Her every energy was devoted to survival in a harsh environment.

Arturo was the first-born. Sickly and marasmatic, he failed to thrive and was expected to die. Shipped to his maternal grandmother's house in one of the repetitive separations to which he was subjected as his parents fled their debts, he began to eat enough to promise survival and grew

into an isolated, almost mute, child who appeared preternaturally aged as he wandered alone through the slum streets of his parents' or grandparents' neighborhood. On the average, he spent more than six months of every year with his grandparents, the transfers being usually hasty affairs, conducted in an atmosphere of financial crisis. His father was wont to disappear for days at a time.

These experiences established the rhythms of his adult life. He never did learn to eat and his diet remained so sparse that associates speculated that he secretly devoured an apple or a cracker in order to stay alive. He would joke that when dire poverty struck, only he would be prepared to do without food. He never did learn to speak in ordinary ways. His relations with his orchestras were, as we shall see, shaped by his verbal inadequacies. Off the podium, he could emit monologues but could not converse.

Separation remained a major theme of his life. He repetitively found reasons to walk out, suddenly and dramatically, on institutions, orchestras and rehearsals. In the same vein, his personal relations were often terminated by his abrupt withdrawal and total refusal to recognize the existence of an offending friend. Even at home, he was frequently wrapped in glowering isolation, communicating with ostracized family members only through intermediaries: "dark balls of silence floated through the room" (Marek, 1975).

When he was nine years old, he was enrolled in the music school of Parma, his native city. This action reflected no esthetic ideal on the part of his parents. It was doubly practical since, as a scholarship student, he received not only free tuition, room, and board, but, at the same time, the training for a readily-available, if low-paying, job in one of the numerous pit-orchestras which were a feature of almost every municipality in Italy. He lived at the school for the next nine years and was never visited there once by his family. His mother blamed this on her lack of a proper dress but her impoverished wardrobe did not prevent her from attending Sunday mass where he would go to see her and his two younger sisters.

Upon graduation, he obtained a job as a cellist in an opera company making a South American tour. When the conductor abandoned the company and the assistant conductor and manager were both booed off the podium, he made his conducting debut. On his return to Italy, he became a wandering free-lance conductor for the next eight years. His activities included the world premieres of *Pagliacci* and *La Bohème*. He took his mother with him from city to city so that she could establish small pensions where his friends could eat for a fee. There is no record of the whereabouts of his father during this time.

At 29 he married. His parents were not invited to the wedding just as they had never attended one of his concerts. His married life soon became stormy: he was a compulsive philanderer and went perpetually from affair to affair. He had much physical magnetism and his need for conquest seemed to increase year by year. He was on tour with his family, but in the bed of his mistress, when the youngest of his four children died of diphtheria in another room of the same hotel. His wife almost left him at this point but he wept, threatened suicide, and persuaded her to remain.

She stayed to be his factotum. After a while, he no longer separated his affairs from his domestic life but began to invite his mistresses home to dinner. After the meal, he would retire to study his scores and leave his wife to entertain the female guests.

He was a failure as a father, without the time or patience for his children (or his grandchildren) whom he treated as if they were intermittently amusing objects, turning on them his great charm for brief moments and then dismissing them. They were consigned to a nurse because of his demands on their mother's time. In response to any behavior that displeased him, he would not speak to the child for days. His surviving son grew up to be, in effect, his father's valet and his two daughters led what have been described as "peculiar and even disastrous lives" (Marek, 1975; Sacks, 1979).

With his peers, he seemed to have "no time ... and ... less inclination ... for gentleness, ... tolerance, patience, humility, humanity or love." He could accept no opposition to his will, immediately severing relations with and denying the existence of anyone who crossed him. He showed "a selfishness that [was] miraculously complete" (O'Connell, 1947).

It was clear that his major emotional relationships were with his orchestras. He was that rarity among conductors, a genuinely publicity-hating individual. He kept no scrapbooks, gave few interviews, and disliked being photographed. In contrast to the assertion that the desire to exhibit to an audience is an essential part of the psychology of the conductor (Weissman, 1964), he enjoyed, above all, conducting at Bayreuth where the orchestra plays in a pit sunk beneath the stage so that the conductor may enter, do his work and leave without being seen or applauded by the audience.

It was only in the intimate communion of the rehearsal that he was able to emerge from his isolation and withdrawal and become fully vibrant and alive. It was only then that he was able to give himself up to the leading of the orchestra and it was only then that he elicited full response from the performers. Players in his various orchestras all agree that "it was the dress rehearsals that were absolutely extraordinary ... something was lost at the concerts" (Shulman, 1967). The performance "was fifty per cent less; and only the people who were at the rehearsal, who faced him there, could know this ... his great moments were not at the concerts: they were at the rehearsals" (Moldavan, 1967); "the rehearsals were incredible ... only the musicians who were in the workshop with him really knew how great he was" (Gingold, 1967).

He gave himself so fully to the rehearsals and, by comparison, so little to the performances that the cart seemed before the horse, as though he performed only in order to be allowed to rehearse. Many of the blow-ups with management that punctuated his career came about because of his incessant demands for more and more rehearsal time.

Toscanini's Gifts

He mounted the podium with an array of autonomous gifts that were unusual even for a musically gifted person. He was almost unbelievably endowed with each of the primary talents that go to make musical ability. He had one of the finest "ears" in the history of modern music: he could hear every note in even the thickest of orchestrations, his sense of time was "incredible."

In addition he had a photographic memory which Feruccio Busoni described as "a phenomenon in the annals of physiology" (Sachs, 1978). Early in his career, a critic challenged his habit of conducting without a score, doubting that anyone could memorize a whole opera. Toscanini responded with an offer to be locked in a room where he would reproduce the document, "ink smudges and all, because that is how I remember it." Late in life he was approached at a party about a piano sonata that had been entered in a contest for which he had been a judge 25 years earlier. He went to the piano and played the piece from memory, all the time shaking his head and repeating dolefully, "Is no good, is no good." His mnemonic abilities were such that he knew every dynamic marking in every score that he conducted. He knew every phrase as if he had composed it himself.

The Impact of the Gifts

For a musician, contact with such a prodigy inevitably alters the internalized relationship with his own image of himself. It is hard to idealize your own gifts when before you stand superior ones: "With other conductors you hesitated. With Toscanini there could be no hesitation ... you had respect ... because you felt that this man standing there was a superior human being" (Moldavan, 1967). Such a confrontation produces an intense fall in self-esteem which will be recouped either through hostile attack on the intruding object (and some musicians hated and resented Toscanini) or else by an acceptance of the superior as an external replacement for the former ego-ideal. Submission is a defense against defiance used in patriotism, religious ecstasy, and hypnosis, in which lost omnipotence is recaptured by dissolution in an idealized figure which nevertheless has qualities of the self (Fenichel, 1939). The tympanist of the New York Philharmonic was once commiserated with for the way Toscanini had shouted at him during a rehearsal. "Yeah", he replied, "if he hadn't been right, I'd have told him off" (Walter, 1967).

His major impact was that of a moralist. Uniquely among conductors, he conceptualized the making of music as a fundamentally ethical act, "he was so honest - musically honest and with himself honest" (Galimir, 1967); "what struck all of us, and what we talked about, was [his] total honesty ... he would say to us, 'Be honest'; and he himself had this honesty" (Shulman, 1967). His only concession to self-praise was his admission that he was an honest musician; his farthest reach of approval for his orchestra an exclamation of, "Is honest performance, you can read it in the score."

Many of Toscanini's most characteristic traits were the result of a fervent search for this truth: his adherence to tempo and dynamic markings, his insistence that difficult passages be played as

written, his refusal to utilize traditional interpolations and alterations. The effect of this was that when the first cellist of the Chicago Symphony heard his first Toscanini concert he went immediately to his conductor to resign, saying, "I want to play with this man ... because this is the first time I've heard honesty and truth in music..." (Wallenstein, 1967).

A technical error was a moral offense and utilization of the music for self-display was worse. His favorite cry of reproach to an orchestra was "vergogna" (shame). Once a soprano, after appearing at La Scala, sang in a provincial production in which she re-interpolated the concluding high note that Toscanini had stripped from her *Cara Nome*. Toscanini heard of this and, at their next piano rehearsal, broke down, saying, "I cannot go on with you. I tried to place you among the stars but you are only a carnival performer."

Vision and Self-Assurance

Much of his moral assurance rested on his conviction that he was privy to a special order of knowledge about the music he performed. His illumination seems to have rested on the fact that he was a synesthetic, one of "the handful of people in the world who have the ability to read and translate into sounds in the inner ear a page of printed music" (Schonberg, 1981). In this he was like Smetana who said, "... when I look at the written music it comes to life in my imagination without any effort of will on my part, as though I could really hear the instruments and voices" (Nass, 1975).

The fact that Toscanini could "*hear* printed music ... with the sense of immediacy that ordinary men and women know only in actual performance" (Marsh, 1956), without any effort of will on his part, made a secular mystic out of him. The music he "heard" served him as the psychological equivalent of a religious vision. The feeling of passivity, the feeling of being operated upon by an agency outside the will, is typical of such experiences which usually also demonstrate the companion characteristics of transiency, ineffability and a conviction of *noësis* (James, 1902). The consequences of each of these aspects of his vision may be traced in Toscanini's behavior.

Interpretation, Inspiration, and the Quest for Perfection

The central problem facing the conductor as a creative artist is the problem of interpretation. Despite its awesome complexity, the Western system of musical notation yields only a partial and skeletonized representation of the music for which it stands. A score simply does not contain enough information to allow a performer to make music by playing the notes and following the dynamic markings. It is impossible to let the music speak for itself, there must be someone who "will share and transmit his own conception of the meaning of the patterned notes" (Gilman, 1938).

The shape and significance given to the score is the personal contribution of the performer; it is the heart of his interpretation, "Toscanini being a great musician, read between the lines, and that

was what gave the music the life it had in his performance" (Gingold, 1967). However, he could convince himself that he had side-stepped the whole need for interpretation due to his immediate perception of the music that he read: in his eyes he was merely an auditor. His "conception of the meaning of the patterned notes" had come to him as the noëtic aspect of his vision.

His experiences made him see himself as a conduit through which the music could flow from the composer to the players. When he would be applauded by the musicians after he had led them through a passage that had sounded particularly beautifully, he would react almost angrily: "No! Is not me. Is in the music ... before your eyes."

Except for the fact that his experience was of the music of others and not original, this self-concept resembled that of many composers who similarly feel they transmit, rather than originate, music. Although the name of the mystical experience derives from its description in religious settings and with religious contents, the state referred to is of much broader occurrence. Many individuals, including many musicians, are capable of these experiences, to which they may or may not attach religious significance. Composers "almost universally [describe] an externally focused experience and ... deny [their] own role in the inspirational process" (Nass, 1975).

Brahms, for example, claimed that his music came to him "directly from God" and that "measure by measure the finished product is revealed to me." Puccini stated that *Madama Butterfly* "was dictated to me by God" and that he was subject to "a supernatural influence which qualifies me to receive divine truths." Richard Strauss reported "definite compelling visions involving a higher selfhood ... it is a mandate from God, a charge entrusted to my keeping" (Nass, 1975).

Such experiences played a large role in the life and work of Wagner, one of the two composers with whom the early reputation of Toscanini was intertwined. Toscanini conducted the Italian premieres of *Siegfried* and *Gotterdammerung*, achieving world-class performances without ever having actually heard either score (Marek, 1975). In an era when one conducted either Verdi or Wagner, Toscanini's battle cry was, "Verdi and Wagner." When he came to the Metropolitan Opera, that institution was strictly divided into an Italian wing and a German wing. He was the first conductor to mount productions in both, and, 40 years later, his ability to master the two styles was still a source of wonder: "with in-a-lifetime unheard-of universality [he conducted] a *Meistersinger* as perfect as a *Butterfly*" (Burghauer, 1967).

Delirium, trance, and ecstasy are major themes of the Wagnerian operas and these reflect the states in which Wagner's music came to him. Much of Wagnerian theater is self-consciously aimed at producing in the audience reproductions of the altered states of Wagner himself who created his music by entering into what he called a "clairvoyant" state in which, he said, a "second organ of transmission" perceived a reality unknown to ordinary people. This "prodigious breaking-down [of] the floodgates of Appearance", he claimed, induced in him a state of ecstasy, surpassed only by that of the saint (Schulster, 1980).

Even Verdi, the only one that Toscanini himself called "Maestro", had hinted at his access to a higher order of truth when, in 1867, the year of Toscanini's birth, he had written, "If only artists could grasp [the] idea of truth; there would no longer be futuristic and backward-looking musicians; no more impressionism, realism, or idealism in painting, neither classic nor romantic poets; but only true poets, true painters, true composers" (Verdi, 1942).

Toscanini's experiences made him into one of the inspired who is convinced that "it is not [he] who speaks [but that] the voice of God speaks through him to men" (Kris, 1952). He became like an Old Testament prophet, a "nabi" who has been consecrated with the authority of a higher power, who exercises a charismatic gift (Arlow, 1951). "Like a Moses with the Ten Commandments he stood there and said, 'This is the law, not of me: it is Beethoven who demands it'" (Burghauser, 1967). When Wilhelm Mengelberg tried to explain to him the "proper German way" to conduct a Beethoven overture, which he claimed to have gotten from a conductor who got it from Beethoven, Toscanini impatiently replied that he had gotten his own conception "direct from Beethoven himself ... from the score" (Schonberg, 1967). When he conducted Verdi, it was as though "Verdi was conducting a Toscanini score: such identification of composer and performer I've never experienced" (Shaw, 1967).

The religious overtones of his behavior were not lost on those around him. He was regularly metaphorized as a priest or a prophet: "Beethoven was God, Toscanini was his prophet and we were the anointed" wrote one of his players (Antek, 1963). A less admiring colleague noted: "It was as illogical to expect Toscanini to praise the approach of another conductor as it would be to expect the Pope to find virtue in Shintoism" (O'Connell, 1947).

Mysticism and Depression

If the ecstatic life provides intermittent escape from a world of pain and strife to an experience of joy, while at the same time conferring moral authority upon the visionary, it also exacts its price. There is a "crash" after every "high." To the extent that "trance" and "possession" were "his essence", the substratum on which rested "his unrivalled gifts as interpreter", to that extent he became liable to the transiency of the mystical experience: "anyone who has watched him closely has seen how he passes, in a moment, from a trance into a state of prostration" (Stefan, 1936). The union with the vision cannot last and the loss of the union is pain. Wagner is very explicit about this aspect of his experiences, "the clairvoyant ecstasy of the musician has to alternate with a perpetually recurrent state of individual consciousness, which we must account the more distressful the higher has his inspiration carried him above all bounds of individuality" (Sehulster, 1980).

The memory of the inspirational experience remains to haunt the wakened visionary and much artistic activity is an attempt to reduce the pain by recapturing what is remembered of the former state. Tartini poignantly describes the "Devil's Trill" sonata which came to him in a dream as being "so wonderful and beautiful ... as I had never even conceived in my boldest flights of fantasy." Upon awakening, he attempted to reproduce what he had experienced, considered the

music he thus produced to be the best that he had ever written, but concluded that the effort had been a failure: "the difference between it and that which so moved me is great" (Nass, 1975).

On identical grounds, no performance by an orchestra ever quite satisfied Toscanini, "he suffered acutely from the imperfection of what he heard as compared with the music of his dreams" (Zweig, 1936). His rehearsals were marked by an unceasing striving after a highly specific experience which was often almost, but never totally captured; "an orchestra was just an instrument for him ... whether it was French or German or American or the BBC, he set out to make the music come from that orchestra the way he heard it from the score" (Schoenbach, 1967).

To the orchestra, "he seemed an unhappy man ... we always sensed his frustration in reaching for something ... just beyond his grasp ... we sensed his despair" (Antek, 1963). His conducting was "almost an act of desperation" as he tried to persuade the players to reproduce "the justness and purity of disembodied sound for which there are no wholly satisfying vehicles in this imperfect world" (Gilman, 1938); as a result, every rehearsal took place in "a continuous psychology of crisis." It was as if there were "an emergency which demanded every ounce of energy and concentration." Everything was done "as though [the players'] very lives depended on its perfection" (Schonberg, 1967).

He was aided in his search for a reproduction by his absolute memory of what he had heard and his ability, which both Mozart and Beethoven also described themselves as having, of experiencing an entire musical composition "as though cast in a single piece" so that the parts may be heard in the mind's ear, not successively, but all at once (Esman, 1979). Prepared in this way, "he came to the rehearsal knowing ... exactly what he wanted out of it ... it was something that had to be achieved" (Wallenstein, 1967). He never experimented at rehearsals, as other conductors do, "other conductors ... [took] half a page to know what they wanted to do ... Toscanini had the piece of music ... before his eyes when he started the rehearsal" (Moldavan, 1967).

Mysticism and Rage

If the performance matched the expectation, if everyone was "putting blood", he would lose himself in what seemed to be a state of transport: "He [got] transfixed. A look [came] over his face", he was like "St. Francis in ecstasy" (Marsh, 1956). His expression did not mirror the mood of the music, rather, his "clenched teeth, taut face and neck muscles, flushed skin, perspiration, and the wide-open staring eyes" showed his "total and passionate involvement" (Antek, 1963). The orchestra would empathically register their conductor's transport, "[when] we hit it ... it was as though the clouds broke and the sun came through ... when things went well it was heaven" (Shulman, 1967). Each player would feel that his alone "was the responsibility of achieving this inexpressible atmosphere of benediction" (Antek, 1963).

When the music became more dramatic, "his blood went up, his face got red, and he was singing away, yelling at the top of his lungs, his whole being 'gone'. That's when, if anything went wrong ... the top blew off" (Carboni, 1967). He would be "lost in the mood" when some "frustration he felt because of the disparities between the notes on the printed score, the music in his mind's ear, and the sounds that actually came from the orchestra" would cause him to suddenly lash out "in language that would blanch the face of a longshoreman" (Antek, 1963).

When the music went wrong, he "suffered, really suffered ... a sloppy phrase, a careless note, an awkward entrance - these were enough to ruin his disposition for a week" (Schonberg, 1967). He was this open only at rehearsals, which were closed to the public and the press. In concert he conducted himself with "Stoic self-discipline" making no reaction even in the face of catastrophic blunders, "his tantrums ... were for the orchestra" (Marsh, 1956).

In the intimacy of the rehearsal room, there were "sights and sounds no less alarming and splendid than a thunderstorm" (Zweig, 1936), as his disappointment triggered "his frightful irritability and his habit of perpetually abusing the artists, the chorus and orchestra during rehearsals" (Schonberg, 1967). He would "groan, forget the restraints of politeness, lose control, rage, curse and deliver volleys of abuse" (Zweig, 1936). He became a frightening sight, "that red face - that violence - it could kill anyone!" (Carboni, 1967). In the name of Beethoven, in the name of honesty, he was capable of rages which left sober men shaking with fear, "paroxysms of fury going far beyond the normal indignation of a conductor and approaching frenzy" (Marsh, 1956). In the 1920's, when he was brought to trial by a player injured in one of his outbursts, the Italian judges considered the case gravely and proceeded to find Toscanini innocent by virtue of artistic insanity (Sacchi, 1957).

He would bellow, break his baton, pound on and rip up the scores, tear his handkerchief, throw his pocket-watch on the floor where he would grind it to fragments under his heel, and often end by stalking off the stage denouncing the players in gutter Parmesan dialect as fools, tools, clowns, and pharmacists. In his seventies when, it was generally agreed, he had mellowed considerably, he would still produce "the most horrifying sounds I have ever heard." They "seemed to come from his entrails...he would first double up, his mouth open wide, his face red as if on the verge of an apoplectic fit...then a raucous blast of unbelievable volume would blare forth." It was like "the terrible shrieking of stuck bulls in a slaughterhouse" (Antek, 1963).

Not only were the players reduced to constant anxiety by their inability to predict when one of these frightening spectacles would be unleashed but their condition of helplessness was augmented by having to be silent in response to the abuse heaped upon them when the storm broke. When he was having an outburst, it was impossible to engage him rationally. Even mild apologetic protestations served only to infuriate him further. As a result the players "were repeatedly warned not to answer back, no matter what the provocation" (Antek, 1963). This prohibition of any adequate response to an overwhelming stimulus necessarily increased their feelings of resentment and anxiety, lowered their self-esteem and increased their feelings of guilt, since the inhibition of aggression creates and augments guilt (Freud, 1924).

Loving the Attacking Object

They were therefore ready, through a process of reversal, to begin to love the attacking object: "I loved him even when he yelled" (Carboni, 1967). They accepted and were even proud of tolerating treatment from him which they would not take from anyone else; "if any other conductor had even begun to speak to an orchestra the way Toscanini did, he would have been put in his place immediately" (Antek, 1963).

They went further by becoming protective about the tantrums, as if they were contributing to his well-being by enduring them; "it's all right", they reassured each other, "it's good for his blood" (Walter, 1967). Eventually, they came to worry if he was unusually placid for a few days, and, when the next outburst came, "we were actually relieved" (Antek, 1963). They responded to the renewal of rage with pride, as if his behavior certified that he was really theirs.

When Toscanini returned to the rebuilt La Scala to conduct the inaugural concert in 1946, his first rehearsals passed off "in an atmosphere of absolute cordiality." The younger men looked incredulously at the old-timers, questioning the stories they had been told. "But it was a matter of time: little by little the Maestro's observations became rather more authoritative, more incisive, less kindly; the invitations to 'make an effort', the exhortations to 'sweat' were peremptory, accompanied by the well-known gesture of the accusatory index finger; and his glances began to delve again into our eyes and into our hearts." This was rapidly followed by flying scores, torn handkerchiefs and broken batons. Now, recalled the concert-master "the youngsters had stopped looking at us and appeared rather stricken ... it was our turn to smile ... at last we had found 'our' Maestro again, just as we remembered him from distant times, just as we had known, admired, feared and loved him" (Sachs, 1978).

Sustaining the Leader

Part of the check to their anger came from their sympathy for him. He was so clearly dependent on their performances, so vulnerable when they went wrong, so unsparing in his criticism of himself. His treatment of himself was harsher than his abuse of them. If he blamed himself for a bad concert, he would lock himself in his dressing room for hours, howling in pain and beating his head on the walls. Once he ripped his chest open and required bandaging. At one rehearsal he mentioned that he was dissatisfied with his last performance of a piece and forcefully slapped himself in the face.

His self-esteem was fragile and completely in the hands of his players. In the third act of *La Bohème* he unexpectedly beat a rest bar and caused the trumpets to make a false entrance. The evening was a triumph; he was destroyed. He stood sadly by the exit door, a crushed figure, saying to the departing players, "You will go home and sleep with your wives as if nothing had happened ... but for me, for me life is over ... how can I face anyone after this? I am finished."

This attitude pervaded every rehearsal. As he conducted, "his shoulders strained and hunched as though buffeting a giant wind. His out-stretched left arm spasmodically flailed the air, the cupped fingers pleading like a beseeching beggar" (Antek, 1963).

Leadership and Brain-Washing

In their condition of ambivalent fearfulness and pity, the performers had entered the preliminary phase of mind of someone who is about to undergo religious conversion or be brain-washed. Even hypnosis, which is usually brought on by suggestions of relaxation and sleepiness, can be induced by the creation of unremitting tension. The techniques of bringing individuals, not spontaneously liable to them, into conditions approximating the mystical experience are implicit in the spiritual exercises of the visionaries or the methods of the evangelical preachers and become explicit in the manuals of the professional brain-washers, most of which are based on the experiments that Pavlov was led to conduct after seeing the reactions of his dogs to being almost drowned in their cages during a flash-flood.

These techniques involve an unvarying sequence which begins with the institution of overwhelming tension accompanied by feelings of fear and rage and goes on to the systematic undermining of self-esteem, the induction of guilt, the establishment of intense empathic closeness with the operator, the extinction (through non-reward) of accustomed modalities of response, and the enforcement of all these techniques by the use of physical debilitation (Sargant, 1957). This sequence sounds remarkably like a prescription for a Toscanini rehearsal.

He displayed a fanatical devotion to his work. He arrived so punctually, was so prepared for the music he was going to rehearse and gave of himself so unstintingly during the rehearsal that the players were made to feel selfishly self-protective. He sweated profusely and reproached them for not sweating enough. He never sat down, even during the longest rehearsals, out of respect for the music. The members of his orchestras "took their parts with them to practice them at home, and came to rehearsals early to practice them some more" (Walter, 1967). This even happened at the regal Vienna Philharmonic, "a thing that was never heard of" (Burghauser, 1967).

Despite this, more was demanded if the performers were to keep their self-regard in his presence; "his own vitality and passion were such that shallowness of expression, lack of vigor, poverty of soul, drove him to near madness ... he expected of others the same divine urge and boundless energy" (Merrill, 1965). "'Look at me! I give everything - EVERYTHING' he would scream hoarsely, beating his chest with his clenched fist, 'Look at me! VERGOGNA! Shame on you ... you ... YOU'" (Antek, 1963). He needed to feel that everyone was doing his utmost and raged continuously at them for holding back. This constant chiding eventually affected their self-confidence, "at first it frightens you; then you feel different. It's not exactly fright: your conscience bothers you, are you doing well, are you doing wrong?" (Martinelli, 1967).

Their sense of uncertainty could only be augmented by Toscanini's increasing vivacity as they

grew fatigued during the long practice sessions that he preferred. He himself seemed never to tire of rehearsing: "we would rehearse for hours and all fall exhausted while he planned still another try" (Merrill, 1965). "Somebody else would get tired and say 'What's the use?' or 'Let's go on'; but not he; he'd go over it and over it" (Schoenbach, 1967). He would stand, "bathed in perspiration, through rehearsals lasting hours ... driving himself and exhausting us" (Antek, 1963).

When he was preparing Stabile to appear as Falstaff, he spent an entire morning going over and over a single phrase: "Due fagiani. Un'acciuga." A female friend visiting his wife was benumbed by the endless repetition and the two women went out for lunch and an afternoon's shopping. They returned towards supper-time to find the exhausted singer still standing by the rehearsal-piano, still attempting the same nine syllables (Sacchi, 1957). "The day you had a rehearsal with him, that was it: you made no other appointments" (Peerce, 1967).

The Development of Empathy

During these long, wearing sessions an almost unbelievable empathy developed. Part of this was due to necessity. Toscanini was a poor linguist in any language. He had been an almost mute child (like Nietzsche and Einstein, cf. Gedo, 1979) and grew into an adult who communicated primarily para-verbally; "there were no words" (Moldavan, 1967). He "never quite explained himself. He would make all kinds of remarks and shout; but it wasn't clear what he was driving at" (Schoenbach, 1967). The players were forced, in order to grasp his intentions, to rely on his "real capability of telepathic communication ... it was an entirely unheard-of ability, almost like the clairvoyance of a seer" (Burghauser, 1967).

A similar situation existed with regard to his baton. He often conducted with a circular motion, as if stirring a kettle. Musicians in his orchestra would be asked by other musicians, "How do you know what he's doing?" (Gingold, 1967). His inarticulate baton often left the orchestra "adrift without ... knowing where, exactly, the beat was." He would appeal to the orchestra, "Don't look at the stupid stick in my hand! I don't know myself what it does. But feel - feel what I want. Try to understand!" (Antek, 1963).

Somehow, they did: "It was difficult for an outsider to understand; but we understood it perfectly" (Gingold, 1967). The orchestra was forced to revert to "pre-verbal" communication both in the language of words and the language of the baton. "Even after fifteen years I had to watch the expression on his face as he conducted ... and because he had ... this power ... you just responded as if you had known exactly what he wanted" (Peerce, 1967).

Being Centered On

As they reached out, trying to intuit his message, they were aware of something reaching back to them, they experienced a gripping sensation of being focused on by him. Something in his

myopic gaze seems to have riveted almost everyone on whom it fell, making an impression of "flaming energy" and "a power of concentration almost ferocious in its intensity" (O'Connell, 1947). Away from the orchestra he often seemed abstracted, "his eyes fixed on vacancy." Only when he began to rehearse was his isolation "transformed into intimate communion" (Zweig, 1936): "Before Maestro started ... his eyes flashed around so that he'd have contact - that was one of the remarkable things - so that he'd have contact with the entire orchestra before that baton came into play" (Shulman, 1967).

One performer described the effect: "Our eyes met. Never before or since have I seen such eyes. They were like nails burning right through me" (Merrill, 1965). Another one recalled, "he always looked at the players ... and what a fantastic look! He could stare you to death with that look! It was a very fiery look! ... there was something in Toscanini's look that made it special", it established "incredible contact" (Galimir, 1967).

This contact was further augmented by Toscanini's ear, "one of the three great ears I've encountered in my years of playing under conductors: the others were Monteux's and Cantelli's" (Shulman, 1967). The assistant-concertmaster of the Philharmonic recalled, "we were playing fortissimo in some piece; and he stopped and said to one player - the second clarinet or someone like that: 'Did you play this note? Because I didn't hear you.' And the man said: 'No, I didn't play it'" (Bolognini, 1967).

He had established his dominance over the orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera when, during their first rehearsal, he heard the cellos play a note which was incorrectly copied into their parts, one which no previous conductor had ever noticed. This ability to hear every note brought pressure on every player to "be there at every moment ... although the eyes didn't see you, the ears heard" (Wallenstein, 1967). The result was "that a hundred people [had] this immediate mental contact", something which "happened with no other conductor in my fifty years of playing" (Burghauser, 1967).

Nor could the performer ever relax his attention, secure that he could anticipate the demands that would be made. Toscanini would constantly change tempos and phrasings, insisting on the new way "with wrathful conviction" and then, the next day, change back again. What he demanded was that everyone play at all times beyond the limit of his ability; "he hated - and fought - the musician who thought something in music is easy" (Bolognini, 1967). His "greatest flare-ups ... occurred when he was seized with the suspicion that the orchestra was coasting and was accepting both the music and him too casually" (Antek, 1963).

On the other hand, he could accept performances of obvious technical imperfection if he felt that everyone shared his desire to achieve the best possible and was working as hard, as conscientiously, as unstintingly as he, "putting forth [his] best effort at all times" (Marsh, 1956). "'La routine' - the death of music" was his cry. And yet, no matter how hard the players tried, he felt it was wrong to praise them: "Non c'è male", he would grudgingly admit (Antek, 1963).

Ecstasy and Fusion

They were caught between the implacable demands and the sparse acknowledgement. They were fearful, fatigued and overawed. With the red face of the Maestro looming over them like a baleful moon, they themselves began to have ineffable and noëtic experiences. Winthrop Sargeant, who, before he became a music critic, had played under him in the New York Philharmonic, insisted that Toscanini had a "mysterious personal power that lay outside ordinary comprehension" (Schonberg, 1967). He was, said another violinist, "like a magnet, you could feel the magnetic lines pulling you" (Carboni, 1967), and the same experience was recorded by yet another member of the string section, "the fire in him would communicate itself to us: we would feel it with him ... this happened many times and the only explanation was magnetism, electricity" (Moldavan, 1967). Like Trilby under the influence of Svengali, "there was something that electrified you to a point where you had the feeling you played better than you can play" (Galimir, 1967).

These feelings of being magnetized easily progressed to feelings of dissociation. The first bassoonist of the Philadelphia Orchestra was "carried away almost to the point where I'd forget to come in and play" (Schoenbach, 1967). The Eva of his last *Meistersinger* at La Scala recalled her performance: "The whole thing was a dream. I remember that I sang and that I acted, but it wasn't I. It was the spirit of Toscanini which made me sing, with those two deep eyes always fixed on me, eyes which were so eloquent that one had to become excellent even if one were not" (Marek, 1975).

As the feelings of dissociation deepened, the players became subject to hallucinatory phenomena. When rehearsing *The Perfumes of the Night*, from *Iberia*, one player asserts: "I swear I smelled the perfumes; and I was not the only one" (Galimir, 1967). They also became suggestible in ways that went beyond ordinary compliance. Robert Shaw recalls that in immediate response to a gesture of Toscanini's the tone of his choir became deeper and broader. This struck him as a "staggering thing which never happened with another conductor" because "vocal sound, when it's in blocks of sixty people, remains what it is: you can't ... change this tone just by gesture ... but with Toscanini the tone changed" (Shaw, 1967).

Within the state that had been induced, the performer experienced a sense of lightness and exhilaration: "with Maestro Toscanini you had wings" (Horszowski, 1967), "he made you float. He made the impossible come true" (Merrill, 1965). A violin player described his first rehearsal with Toscanini after some rehearsals with Arthur Rodzinski, then an assistant conductor: "I felt I was being sucked into a roaring maelstrom of sound - every bit of strength and skill being called upon and strained into being. Bits of breath, muscle, and blood, never before used, were being drained from me. I sensed, more than I heard, with near disbelief, the new sounds around me. Was this the same music we had been practicing assiduously for days? Like ships torn from their mooring in a stormy ocean we bobbed and tossed, responding to those earnest, importuning gestures. With what a new fierce joy we played."

These feelings of lightness, exhilaration, and joy grew until the performers felt themselves to be "participating in an ecstatic living rite" (Antek, 1963). After the dress rehearsal of the Salzburg Meistersinger, the orchestra, chorus and singers were in such a pitch of emotion that when the curtain fell and was raised again for the usual final comments, not one of the hundred people on the stage, not one member of the orchestra in the pit, not one stagehand behind the scene, moved. The cast stood silent, overcome, almost like statues except that tears trickled from many eyes (Marek, 1975).

Peak Experiences

Such moments constituted the peak experiences in many performers' lives. After the moment had passed, they suffered the same pains the mystic does when his visionary transports fade. "It was tragic; because after this we could never enjoy other conductors" (Burghauser, 1967). Maria Caniglia recalled that, "After the four performances I said to him, 'Maestro, this night my career could well finish, because I have achieved the greatest of my aspirations'" (Marek, 1975). Even the renowned Marcel Tabuteau, America's premier oboist and the only man ever to teach simultaneously all the woodwind courses at the Curtis Institute of Music responded to a guest appearance by Toscanini with, "Now I can die" (Schoenbach, 1967).

Inevitably, the man who could induce such transports was compared to a god, "he was a god ... luminous and mighty" (Merrill, 1965), "you felt ... in the presence of a god" (Gingold, 1967). The bassoonist of the Vienna Philharmonic, having escaped Europe after the Anschluss, returned to visit post-war Vienna. He took a seat in the orchestra pit next to an old colleague with whom he had played under all the great conductors of Europe. The orchestra was playing for a performance of Salomé and, when the line was sung from the stage, "He is a holy man...he has seen God", the colleague leaned forward and whispered, "We, too, have seen God." It was unnecessary to specify who was meant (Burghauser, 1967).

Thus, the pleasure in the music that was made was overshadowed by the pleasure in the relationship that made the music possible. The rehearsal eclipsed the concert for the performers as for the leader. It was the experience of being led and the feelings it aroused which became the thing prized: "I've played with many conductors - great conductors - Furtwangler, Walter, Klemperer ... with every conductor there were great moments ... but I would say the greatest experience, playing with a conductor, was with Toscanini" (Galimir, 1967). In an inversion of means and ends, this became the measure of his genius: "his greatness is attested to not so much by his performances but ... in what we felt ... the warm pulsating bond that flowed between [us] ..." (Antek, 1963).

The Relation of Toscanini with his Orchestra

Orchestra and conductor were thus knit into a union, a mutually interdigitated group in which each functioned as the necessary support of ecstatic states in the other. Of the two, Toscanini was at once the more self-absorbed and the more dependent. Since his autonomous gifts permitted him total identification with the composers he performed, he could allow himself a sternly moralistic stance, secure in his belief that the pursuit of truth must lead to a validation of his vision.

From the strength of his faith in himself as a conduit for the intentions of the composer emanated whispers of heaven, promises of admission to a higher order of beauty and integrity, offers of an apotheosis to be obtained only by accepting him as the incarnation of the ideal. He bolstered these inducements by employing every known device that serves to disrupt the usual self-possession of an individual and renders him vulnerable to possession by another. He labored continually to install his performers as distanced but not separated aspects of himself, serving in this way as a bridge (*brücke*) that connected them to that illusory Beethoven who was actually Toscanini's creation.

Once enmeshed in such a system, the players were incapable of autonomous action, having given up self-regulation in favor of the hope of merger into a larger unity. In exchange, they, at times, gained access to states of transport (the *unio mystica*), at the height of which they felt they were at one with the sublime. In relinquishing self-control they had paradoxically become more uniquely themselves since they were now able to achieve their own pre-existing ideals.

Additionally, they always felt that in yielding to him they were nurturing him. Without knowing the details, they sensed that he had been crippled by an impoverished and traumatizing childhood, that his incapacity for ordinary relatedness made him turn to his working relations as a desperate mode of escape from his pain and his rage. His need caused him to radiate an atmosphere of intense caring, impersonal to the performer but fiercely attached to the performance, which reproduced in important ways the behavior of a parent whose psychological stability depends on encouraging the development of a gifted child.

As the providers of the gratifications for which he lived, his performers knew that they were more important to him than his wife, his children, his mistresses, or his audiences. They cared for and cured him with unstinted devotion: study and practice before a rehearsal and total commitment once in it. In this context of concern they reacted contentedly to his irritable demandingness and guiltily when some failure of theirs undid his ecstatic defenses and plunged him into the anguished rage from which their efforts were designed to protect him. He was clearly more fragile than they and they needed to solace him so he could lead them. In providing the medium of his states of rapture they guaranteed the materials of their own. Freud would have said that what they felt for him could only be called love.

[N.B. This would be a good time to re-read the early section on "Charisma and Group Leadership"]

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