

Changes in Images, Life Events and Music in Analytical Music Therapy: A Reconstruction of Mary Priestley's Case Study of "Curtis"¹.

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Abstract

This study is a reconstruction of the case study of "Curtis," a client of Mary Priestley who participated in Analytical Music Therapy (AMT) with her for 119 sessions over the course of three years from 1978 to 1981. Curtis, a client in his early thirties who had schizophrenia, was the subject of Priestley's chapter entitled "Analytical music therapy and the 'Detour through Phantasy'" which appeared in her *Essays on Analytical Music Therapy* (1994). The present study integrates and elaborates on the clinical data from Priestley's published writings about Curtis and her unpublished clinical data about him found in the Priestley archives at Temple University's Paley Library. This includes Priestley's diaries and recorded clinical improvisations of her work. The purpose of this study was to determine if significant changes occurred during the course of AMT with Curtis and if so, to understand how these changes were manifested in the client's images, life events, and music improvisations. References to Curtis in Priestley's published and unpublished sources were coded for images and life changes. Five improvisations were selected from seven audiotapes and were structurally analyzed and interpreted in a psychodynamic context according to the Improvisation Assessment Profiles (IAPs) developed by Kenneth Bruscia (1987). The research led to the conclusion that there were changes evident in all three dimensions of images, life, and music over the course of therapy.

Editor's Note: Excerpts of the various improvisations discussed in this monograph can be heard at www.barcelonapublishers.com.

Introduction

The purpose of this reconstructive case study was to determine if significant changes occurred during the course of Analytical Music Therapy (AMT) for an individual ("Curtis") with whom Priestley worked, and if so, to understand how these changes were manifested in the client's images, life events and music improvisations. Subordinate questions were: 1) what changes occurred in the images during his three years of therapy; 2) what changes transpired in Curtis' life during this period; 3) what changes occurred in Curtis' improvised music; and, 4) how were the images, life changes, and improvisations related.

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AMT is "the analytically-informed symbolic use of improvised music by the music therapist and client. It is used as a creative tool with which to explore the client's inner life so as to provide the way forward for growth and greater self-knowledge"³ (2: p. 3). Within the context of this study, an image is defined as a memory, descriptive title, story, metaphor or symbol. Changes in life events include interpersonal relationships, psychological insights, and life circumstances that are the result of changes initiated by the client, and improvisation is defined as the extemporization of sound or music while playing or singing.

Mary Priestley is a co-founder and major proponent of AMT (2, 3), which uses music improvisation as the primary method of therapy in conjunction with verbal dialogue within a psychoanalytic framework. During an improvisation in AMT, images may arise spontaneously, or they may be stimulated by verbal discussion with the therapist; images are also used as titles for improvisations specifically intended to access the unconscious. Improvisations may be non referential (i.e., with no extra-musical title or theme), but most often they are referential (i.e., based on an extra-musical title or theme chosen by the therapist). The referential improvisation is preceded by a verbal dialogue in which "some kind of picture of the [client's] internal situation will develop in the therapist's mind. Something will cry out for investigation" (3: p.120). The purpose of the title or theme of the improvisation is to provide an emotional container for the client to explore therapeutic issues. Following the improvisation, the therapist and client will listen to the taped improvisation, discuss the meaning of the music improvisation, and relate the experience to the client's life.

This paper elaborates upon the published case study of Curtis, a client in his early thirties who had schizophrenia and with whom Priestley worked for three years. The present reconstruction will attempt to integrate and elaborate on the clinical data from Priestley's published writings about Curtis (2) and her unpublished clinical data about him found in the Priestley archives at Temple University's Paley Library, which includes Priestley's diaries and recorded clinical improvisations of her work (1). The first year of treatment in this case study was documented by Priestley in various chapters throughout *Essays on Analytical Music Therapy* (2) and more specifically in the chapter, "Analytical Music Therapy and the 'Detour through Phantasy'" (2: pp. 199-206). The following two years of Curtis' treatment were documented in Priestley's personal diaries. Of particular interest is case material about Curtis that arose from the images that occurred during his sessions, changes that came about in his life events, and his improvisations during the three years of treatment.

In her case study of Curtis, Priestley wrote about the relationship between the images that Curtis used in the improvisations and his significant life changes. However, she did not write about how these life changes were reflected in Curtis' music, nor did she publish an account of the images and life changes that occurred in the last two years of treatment. In reading Priestley's diaries and listening to her improvisations with Curtis, I was fascinated by

³ References to Priestley sources include her unpublished diaries (1), *Essays on Analytical Music Therapy* (2), and *Music Therapy in Action* (3). These will be referenced in the paper as 1, 2, or 3. References to the diaries will appear with the date. For example, (1:3 – 4 – 78) indicates diaries, March 4, 1978. A full reference to these sources can be found in the reference section at the end of the paper. All other references will follow APA format.

three aspects of Curtis' developmental process. These were: 1) the shift in imagery in Curtis' titles and themes for his improvisations, 2) how the images in the improvisations reflected life changes, and finally 3) the developments that occurred in Curtis' music over the course of therapy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aside from this case study, no writings or research studies were found that deal specifically with the relationship between images, music, and life changes over time with clients with schizophrenia. Most case studies by Priestley and her followers tend to focus in depth on two of these three cornerstones of AMT. Discussions of the music describe salient characteristics of the music, but there has been no study to date that provides a detailed analysis of the music as it relates to images and life changes. There are no studies describing work in AMT with persons with schizophrenia.

There are a number of examples in Priestley's writing that describe how changes in the client's images reflect changes in the client's life. One such example is the case study of a depressed client (2: pp. 225-229). In a seminal session, the client had images of "knives" that Priestley used as a title for a dyadic improvisation. Interpreting knives as a symbol of the client's split-off aggression, this improvisation helped the client to confront a significant person in her life and to use her aggression positively to express her needs. No information was provided about what the music sounded like, or how the music expressed the knives.

In other case studies, Priestley alluded to the music and discussed life changes but did not write about the images that occurred in the improvisations. In the case study of Z.O. (2: pp. 235-236) Priestley stated that she heard the image of the "bright shadow" in the client's music even though there was no evidence of it in his life. However, after three years of therapy, positive life changes that the client had brought about bore witness to the bright shadow that Priestley had heard earlier. Priestley did not reveal how the bright shadow was communicated in the music, nor did she reveal the client's imagery.

In the case of a client with communication problems (3: pp. 202-203), Priestley described how she interpreted images in the client's poetry such as "desolation," "deserted peaks," and a "throat of dried hopes" as symbols of her client's internal struggles, and used these as titled images for her improvisations. Expressing these images in the improvisations improved the client's verbal communication; she began to speak in complete sentences and to initiate conversations with others, all significant life changes for this client. Priestley demonstrated the connection between images and life changes, but the details of how the images were expressed in the music were not included.

The last illustration of how images, music and changes in the client's life unfold in Priestley's case studies is taken from the many examples in Priestley's chapter that describes techniques for accessing the unconscious (3: pp. 129-136). Priestley relates how a client used her aggression to fight a battle with an imaginary lion as she played the drum, and in so doing, she began to understand how she had turned her aggressive impulses against herself and how she could utilize them as a resource in the world. In this example, Priestley focused on the image but she neither described the music nor recounted how her client's insight provoked further life changes.

The case studies that have been written by Priestley's followers demonstrate a similar trend in that the focus is on some aspect of the music, imagery or life changes, but not on the relationship among all three. In some studies the client's images are not discussed, while in others, life changes are not indicated. Where references to the music occur, they are phenomenological descriptions of a particular moment or moments and are used to illustrate an aspect of the dyadic relationship or to demonstrate how salient characteristics in the music reflect images or life changes. References to the client's music do not describe detailed changes in the music over time and do not consistently relate them to the images and life changes, nor are there any structural, methodical analyses of all the musical elements.

Pedersen's (2002, 2003) case study of the Sea Urchin is perhaps the most complete example of a discussion of the relationship between images, music, and life changes in Analytically Oriented Music Therapy (AOM)⁴. Pedersen described how a client created improvisations based on images that arose in his dreams and paintings in order to gain insight and initiate life changes. Detailed information was provided about the images, the musical relationship between client and therapist, and the client's insights and life changes. However, only an informal description of changes in the music over the course of therapy such as alterations in color and tone were described. There was no formal analysis of the musical elements.

Purdon's (2002) account of her work with children demonstrated how a six year old girl improvised a hymn which served as a symbol of connection to her dead grandmother. In another case study, a four year old symbolically acted out the trauma of a long hospital stay and separation from her family by inventing a musical story with songs using instruments and a doll. In both case studies, Purdon described the images, the role of the music, and the psychological process that occurred in therapy, but she did not comment upon the music itself or on how the psychological insights that were gained had an impact upon the child's life.

In a case study of a young man with depression, Scheiby (1998) created metaphors to describe how she and the client were relating musically during a dyadic improvisation. Descriptions of the music focused on significant moments in the improvisations and their meaning, but Scheiby did not explain how the music changed over time, nor did she explore either the client's images or his life changes beyond the fact that his depression was alleviated.

In the case study of a young woman suffering from unresolved grief, Scheiby (1991) described how her client's music and images represented feelings that related to her dead father. She provided a phenomenological description of some segments of music that accompanied selected images and noted that the client's images of her father changed over time, but she neither analyzed the music structurally, nor described changes in the music over time, nor recounted how the psychological shift evident in her client's imagery affected her life.

From this representative literature review, it is evident that images, music, and life changes are reflected in AMT case studies to varying degrees. All studies include references to either the client's images, or brief phenomenological descriptions of the music, or changes related to the client's life. However, neither structural analyses of the musical elements, nor the

⁴ AOM, as practiced by Pedersen, is defined as "a further development of what was earlier called Analytical Music Therapy." See Wigram, T., Pedersen, I. & Bonde, L. (2002), pp. 121-124.

relationship between changes in the client's music, images, and life events, have been described consistently over time.

The purpose of this case study of Curtis was to understand how changes in images, life events, and music unfold in the course of AMT. In order to do so, I have examined how Curtis used images over the course of three years of therapy, and I have analyzed the elements and structure of the music from significant stages throughout his therapy to uncover changes in the musical content and changes in the dyadic musical relationship. I have connected Curtis' images to his music within the context of life changes that were concurrent with them.

METHOD

Participant

This historical reconstructive research is based on the case study of Curtis, a client of Mary Priestley with a diagnosis of schizophrenia who had music therapy with her on a weekly basis for a period of three years. The name of the client has been changed in accordance with the name used by Priestley in her published case study in order to protect the client's anonymity.

Materials

Data includes Priestley's published case study and references to Curtis (2) and archival materials that have been recently acquired by Temple University's Paley Library. The archival materials consist of 119 weekly entries in Priestley's diaries from 1978 to 1981 (1) in which she commented on client improvisations. There are also seven audiotapes of improvisations by Curtis. Information relevant to Curtis, such as the date and the title or theme of the improvisation, along with Priestley's comments about the session, was extracted from her diaries and entered into Microsoft Word on a PC computer in a file under the client's name.

Original session tapes were made by Priestley for every session from the first one on March 17, 1978, to session 37 on January 29, 1979. There were no recordings made from session 38 on February 5, 1979 to session 115 on March 2, 1981, and recordings were resumed for session 116 on March 9, 1981 to session 118 on April 6, 1981. The cassette recordings were converted to digital files using the program "Peak" on a Macintosh computer and were burned onto a CD directly from the Peak files using the program iTunes. All the above work was carried out at Temple University.

The Individual Assessment Profiles (IAPs) developed by Bruscia (1987, pp. 403-496), are "a model of client assessment based upon clinical observation, musical analysis, and psychological assessment of the client's improvisation" (p. 403). The IAPs provided a structured and comprehensive method with which to analyze all the musical elements in the improvisations and to interpret them in a psychodynamic context.

Design

This qualitative study was based on a hermeneutical approach in which I considered all the above materials as different interpretive sources. I established integrity by maintaining thoroughness in extracting all material related to imagery, life changes, and Priestley's comments that appeared in her diaries, and by comparing her diary entries to her published work to find every reference to Curtis. Using a technique of triangulation applied to these various audio, print, and analytic sources, I identified correspondences among them and I integrated their content. I considered these multiple perspectives within the theoretical framework of the AMT model, psychodynamic theory, and my clinical knowledge of the challenges and problems faced by persons with schizophrenia who deal with issues similar to those experienced by Curtis, the subject of this study.

The analysis of musical elements in the improvisations using the IAP method was interpreted according to psychodynamic concepts. A psychodynamic interpretation is particularly suited to therapy using the AMT model because AMT is based on theoretical foundations of psychoanalysis and employs psychodynamic concepts. Implied in a psychodynamic interpretation of the musical elements analyzed in the IAPs, is the belief that musical elements are symbols that have meanings which extend beyond pure sound. Priestley, too, interpreted images and musical events symbolically and attributed interpretive meaning to them. Therefore, the psychodynamic interpretation of the IAPs is aptly suited to decipher and interpret meaning from Curtis' music.

Procedure

I began by coding all the material gathered from Priestley's diaries (1) and *Essays in Analytical Music Therapy* (2) for references to images and improvisation titles, life changes, Priestley's comments on the music, and other interpretations by Priestley regarding her client. I listened to Curtis' complete audio files to determine if I could hear changes in his playing that occurred over time. I divided the diary entries into seven sections where I discerned a shift in the images or life changes. I listened again to the audio files several times to determine if the changes in his life and imagery were congruent with changes in the music. Based on these findings, I reduced the sections to four periods that reflected major changes in images, life, and music. By a process of triangulation, the four periods were constructed as follows: Period I: March 17, 1978 to August 18, 1978 (18 sessions); Period II: August 25 1978 to November 06, 1978 (11 sessions); Period III: November 20, 1978 to July 02, 1979 (29 sessions); and Period IV: July 09, 1979 to termination, April 27, 1981 (63 sessions).

I then selected six improvisations that demonstrated emblematic changes for a structured musical analysis. The IAPs were used to analyze and interpret the musical elements of the improvisations (Bruscia, 1987, pp. 423-455). The IAP analysis consists of three steps: clinical observations of the client while he or she is improvising; a musical analysis of the improvisations; and an interpretation of the data (p. 403). Step one could not be carried out in the context of this historical study, but steps two and three were completed. Two improvisations were selected from the first period; one improvisation each was selected from periods two and

three, and two from period four. Because an IAP analysis of the second improvisation chosen for period four determined that there were no significant changes from the first, it was not included in the final analysis. Once the improvisations had been selected, they were segmented so that an IAP analysis of musical elements could be undertaken.

Segments were selected for their characteristic representation of the various musical elements found in the improvisation. The variety of musical changes determined how many segments were chosen and the repetition of these elements determined when I had reached saturation. It should be noted that Priestley did not record the improvisations from February 5, 1979 to March 9, 1981, which meant that half the improvisations from period three and all but three improvisations from period four were not recorded; therefore, the choice of improvisation was somewhat limited in scope for period three and more limited for period four.

The two improvisations selected for period one were *Conversation at work* (April 21, 1978), a reality theme from session four, and *after getting the sword* (June 30, 1978), a fantasy theme from session 11. There were two selections for this period because Priestley heard differences in Curtis' music between the fantasy and reality improvisations, and she considered both types of referential improvisation to be significant (2: p. 201). *Conversation at work* lasted 15 minutes and 28 seconds and for this analysis, two segments were used; the first was the beginning of the piece from 00:10 to 03:00, and the second, from 08:40 to 10:30. *After getting the sword* had a duration of 12 minutes and 05 seconds. Four segments were selected: 1) 00:00 to 2:50; 2) 3:18 to 4:30; 3) 5:30 to 6:40; and 4) 10:00 to 12:05.

Down under the sea occurred in the 27th session (October 23, 1978), which was the penultimate session in period two. The improvisation lasted 11 minutes and 44 seconds. Four segments were used for this analysis: 1) 00:00 to 3:00; 2) 5:30 to 6:00; 3) 7:50 to 9:30; and 4) 9:31 to 11:44.

The improvisation chosen for period three was *The Fracas*, from session 37 (January 29, 1979). It was nine minutes in length and has been divided into five segments for analysis. These have been determined according to the thematic description of events as described in Priestley's diary of the same date (1). These segments were: 1) quiet eating music, 00:00 to 1:45; 2) the argument, 1:46 to 2:12; 3) tense eating as if nothing had happened music, 2:13 to 3:06; 4) Curtis' conversation with his roommate afterwards, 3:07 to 4:30; and 5) conversation that took place a few days later with one of the persons involved in the fracas, 4:31 to 9:00. IAPs were analyzed for segments one through four. In segment five, Curtis began a process that ushered in changes in his playing that were developed in period four where they became more obvious; therefore, these elements were presented in the IAP analysis of the improvisation in period four.

Nightscene print occurred on March 23, 1981 during the third to last session, and lasted for 12 minutes and 46 seconds. There were two segments in this improvisation, segment one from 00:00 to 1:10 and segment two from 4:00 to 6:04.

The IAP analysis and the psychodynamic interpretation of the IAPs were then integrated with Priestley's diary entries (1) and comments from her published work (2). Together, these sources provided a complete case history that included significant changes in images, life events, and music improvisations as they unfolded in AMT throughout the course of Priestley's work with Curtis.

RESULTS

For each of the four periods, I will present a summary of the images and life changes as they appeared in Priestley's diaries (1) and published source (2). A music analysis will follow in three parts: 1) a short general description of the music in each period and comments about the music from Priestley's written sources where applicable; 2) a short description of the selected improvisation and a summarized IAP analysis of the musical elements, and 3) a psychodynamic interpretation of the IAP analysis. The definitions of the IAP scales and profiles appear in Appendix 1.

Curtis' History

Curtis, a young man of 32, had been recently hospitalized with schizophrenia when Mary Priestley began to see him. Before his illness, he had spent time in France studying voice, though he abandoned his studies when he realized that a professional career would be unlikely (1:5-7-79). He turned to the study of law, the same profession as his father, and at some time during this academic pursuit, Curtis became ill with schizophrenia and his marriage disintegrated (2: p. 200). At the beginning of his music therapy treatment he was living with his parents and working in a routine job in a department store. Priestley noted that he sometimes fell into catatonic states and that he was finding speech difficult (1: 3-17-78; 2: p. 200). He had recently given up singing in a choir, he communicated very little with others, and he had no social engagements outside of work (1:3-17-78).

Period I: March 17, 1978 to August 18, 1978 (18 sessions)

Images: Reality is Opposed to Fantasy

The first period, from March 1978 to August 1978 is the subject of Priestley's Chapter 19, "The Detour Through Phantasy" (2: pp. 199-206). Themes for improvisations alternated between fantasy and reality titles, and Priestley noted that the improvisations based on reality themes "seemed to stop the flow of free verbal expression and to block him and give him a sad, perplexed look as if he had been deprived suddenly and inexplicably of something that he loved" (2: p. 201). She decided to use fantasy to stimulate his expressive abilities, beginning with titles that would "lead to the exploration of his aggressive and sexual drives" (2: p. 202).

In a series of improvisations over six weeks (1:6-16-78 to 8-11-78), Curtis explored his personal images by developing the following myth. In a forest, he found a sword in a river and cleaned it and buckled it onto himself; he came upon a "White Lady" in a turreted castle and performed three services for her: he pursued a stag in the forest; he crossed a river and confronted a dragon with a wooden pole to fetch a book for her; and he took the stag to another herd and witnessed his stag win a battle against the existing leader.

Priestley interpreted the images of the dagger, sword, tower, and stag as symbols of Curtis' sexual and aggressive drives (2: p. 204). Taking the sword from the river, overcoming the dragon with his pole, and taking over the herd with his stag were symbols of the Oedipal

struggle with his father, with whom he had a poor relationship. The river symbolized the female, and the mother/wife was present in the White Lady, whom he was able to please by channeling his aggression, which resulted in successfully completing his difficult tasks (2: p. 204).

The reality-based improvisations that Curtis did during the first nine sessions explored such themes as: conversations with people at work, holidays, and people in his life – mother, father, and doctor; others were based on non referential improvisations using a pentatonic scale (1:3-17 to 5-26-78). Priestley did not report any specific imagery as a result of these improvisations. At the beginning of therapy the most significant images and the greater psychic investment was evident in the fantasy as opposed to reality improvisations (2: p. 202). Priestley did not interpret Curtis' symbols to him at this time, but being aware of the qualitative difference between the fantasy and reality improvisations, she asked Curtis to draw the images he accessed in the improvisations so that they could be externalized and explored (2: p. 204).

Life: Creating Internal Dialogue and Interpersonal Communication

When Curtis began sessions with Priestley, he had difficulty communicating; his speech was flat and monosyllabic, and he could not initiate dialogue (1:3-17-78; 2: p. 200). He stated that he had no thoughts about the past or the future; Curtis' world was an eternal present in which his memories and hopes, if he entertained them, were not expressed (1:5-12-78). As the images in his fantasy improvisations allowed him greater access to his inner life, he began to interact more with the world and his speech became more expressive and spontaneous (1:7- 4-78; 7-13-78). The tasks of manhood that Curtis mastered symbolically in his myth gave him more confidence in work and relationships (2: p. 205). Previously, he had received a poor work report (2: p. 200), but after a few months of therapy he began to recount positive personal changes at work; he conversed with his colleagues more and perceived himself able to stand up for himself when needed (1:6-16-78; 2: p. 202). He continued to live at home with his parents. He had no social engagements, was unable to read, and he passed his time watching television.

Music: Emergent Musical Dialogue

Priestley stated that the music of this early period consisted of "taut, tonal, repetitive rhythmic phrases which every now and then he would alter by changing into another rhythm" (2: p. 128). Priestley also noted an emerging musical dialogue as Curtis began to relate to her as someone with whom he could play, as opposed to relating to her as a part of his larger self (2: p. 204). Two improvisations in this period have been selected for analysis using the IAPs: a) *Conversation at work*, and b) *After getting the sword*.

A) Conversation at Work: Reality Improvisation

Conversation at work was recorded in Curtis' fourth session, April 21, 1978 (1). According to Priestley, her piano part in this improvisation represented "the room and other people," while Curtis played the wooden xylophone to represent his "conversation." Priestley felt that her

playing expressed Curtis' unconscious, which she experienced through countertransference as being "very remote and dreamy"(1).

Based on the IAP analysis, the salient musical elements were the fusion of the rhythmic figure to its rhythmic ground and the fusion of the melodic figure to its tonal ground. Curtis' playing was characterized by perseverative single tones repeated in groups of three or six with occasional forays into duple groupings. Melodic movement consisted of ascending and descending scale patterns in a narrow diatonic range. The subdivisions of the beat created tension resulting from the unpredictable instability of the meter which was affected by an occasional change from a triple to a duple figure; instability also resulted from the sporadic addition of a single note that was added to a metrical grouping which slightly distorted the pulse. Phrasing, timbre, and volume were rigid and did not vary. As a musical partner, Curtis resisted Priestley in changes in volume, tonality, and rhythm.

In the second segment there were slight tempo changes, minor rhythmic figure variations, and slight volume changes that resulted in more flexibility. In addition, Curtis employed a new melodic and rhythmic figure in the form of a glissando alternating with a dotted figure that added some variability. Curtis was less resistant to Priestley, allowing her to follow his pulse more often.

Psychodynamic Interpretation of the IAPs

Curtis' repetition of the same fused melodic and rhythmic figure suggests that he did not feel free to follow his own impulses and to vary them to achieve his own goals. At the same time, the close relationship of the rhythmic figure and rhythmic ground and the perseveration of this figure met his need to avoid any change that would result in his separation from his physical holding environment. The repetitious and restricted melodic elements resulted in a lack of melody that suggests that there was a fundamental bodily and emotional dependency in this music that stemmed from the first developmental stage (0-18 months) and the following developmental stage (18-36 months).

The occasional instability of the rhythmic ground, changing from triple to duple figures, was a reflection of the unpredictable physical holding environment that Curtis experienced. His attempt to maintain a steady rhythmic figure through perseveration was likely a compensatory mechanism; he was attempting to provide holding for himself through predictable repetition. However, the disruption of the rhythmic figure and the occasional slip in the rhythmic ground rendered this attempt unsuccessful and indicated that Curtis was not able to successfully achieve the holding on his own. The presence of these rhythmic tendencies throughout so much of the music may point to issues of trust, physical safety, lack of trust in his own body, all originating in Curtis' infancy.

The constant fusion of his melody with the scale and tonality signified that he had not individuated and was embedded in the emotions, goals, and impulses of his holding environment, specifically with his mother. The invariability of phrasing, timbre, and volume may be other indicators of Curtis' inability to establish his own physical and emotional separateness and identity. He seems unready to organize his own impulses and feelings into meaningful expression in the phrasing, unable to change his identity in the timbre, and unwilling to take or vary his own power in the volume.

Transference issues would most likely surface with regards to Priestley holding the rhythmic ground firm and avoiding any attempt to provoke him to disembed from the rhythmic ground and establish his own musical ideas, for this would represent separation from his mother, a task which Curtis was not yet ready to attempt psychologically. To work through the transference, Priestley would first have to gain Curtis' trust by allowing him to depend on her so that he could feel secure enough to begin to develop his autonomy. In this improvisation, she accomplished this by supporting and following his perseveration; whenever he deviated, she followed him to create a stable holding environment. She stated, "I did not feel it was right to interfere with this musical expression of his naturally self-healing process in any way" (2: p.128).

It seems that this strategy had an impact on Curtis' transference even within this improvisation, which was evident in the changes he made in segment two after he had worked through some of his initial anxiety. Priestley followed him rhythmically to create a secure holding environment, and once he felt more secure, he was able to enter into a relationship with Priestley by allowing her to play in the same pulse as him, rather than resisting her. He also began to be more aware of his own emotions and impulses and to express them in the melodic glissando and dotted rhythmic figure.

The perseveration and embeddedness of Curtis' rhythmic and tonal elements and the invariability of his phrasing, timbre, and volume created considerable tension in the listener, mostly in the form of uncomfortable boredom. One might wonder if another aspect of Priestley's countertransference was boredom with Curtis' music, fuelled by continuous hopes and anticipations for her to be set free by his independence. The musical elements most resistant to change would likely be the melodic, rhythmic, and phrasing elements, since these were the most salient. Therefore, a breakthrough in the transference would be more likely to occur first in those elements that were not salient, such as volume and timbre.

B) After Getting the Sword: Fantasy Improvisation

Priestley noted the emergence of a musical dialogue in *After getting the sword*, an improvisation done in their eleventh session on June 30, 1978 (1). Curtis' rhythm became bolder and the melodies were more creative and adventurous, with more expressed emotion. During *After getting the sword*, Curtis imagined that he went uphill to a deep forest and found a white turreted castle with a White Lady living with her maidens. They gave him a meal and he pledged his services to the White Lady (1).

Priestley's interpretation of this improvisation was that Curtis was coming to terms with his aggressive and sexual drives which were presented in the symbolism of phallic objects, which in this improvisation was the sword. Curtis was also projecting the positive idealized mother transference onto Priestley through the image of the White Lady (2: p. 205). She described the moment of the pledge to the White Lady in her diary, "This bit was played very quietly; he also glanced at me when he said it as if I were the lady in question. The music was lovely and most moving" (1). She added, "The pledging of service to the White Lady had the quality of a sacrament; there was an almost tangible feeling of deep mystery while he played this passage" (2: p. 205).

In the four segments chosen for analysis in this improvisation, parts one and four were played on the wooden xylophone and resembled *Conversation at work*, in that Curtis used a

similar rhythmic-melodic figure of repeated notes in ascending and descending scale patterns while adhering to one tonality. Segments two and three were selected because of their noteworthy exploration of timbre and volume. In segment two, Curtis used the drum and in segment three, he used the cymbal in addition to the wooden xylophone.

According to the IAPs, the salient elements in this improvisation were the variability in timbre, primarily through a) changes in instrumentation, b) contrasts in volume, and c) a stable, more flexible tempo. Elements in his playing that resisted change were the fusion of the rhythmic figure and the melodic figure to their grounds, and a dependent intermusical relationship that was evident by Curtis' reliance on Priestley for the overall direction of the improvisation.

Psychodynamic Interpretation of the IAPs

Throughout this improvisation, Curtis was over-reliant on structure and was embedded in it, both physically and emotionally. This was demonstrated in his rhythmic perseveration on the subdivision of the beat and in his sequencing of the three-note descending melody by which he provided himself with his own holding environment. However, by exploring different timbres, Curtis began to establish his own identity separate from Priestley (mother) while modeling it closely on hers.

Clinically speaking, the way for Curtis to make progress with his dependent identity issue would be through the timbre, because when the timbre changed, he also began to play more responsively with regards to volume and rhythm. By following Priestley's changes in volume, Curtis was beginning to experiment with his own power. The subtle changes in rhythm indicated he was also discovering the energy available in his impulses. However, when he returned to playing the xylophone in segment two, his rhythmic perseveration indicated that he still felt physically and emotionally unsafe, causing him to be extremely dependent on creating a stable holding environment for himself.

Curtis' short excursion into the exploration of his own identity with the drum timbre had an effect on the music that followed in segment three. When Priestley became bolder in her melody and accompaniment, Curtis became responsive to her on the cymbal, as if he was waiting for his mother to lead so that he might get out of his own world. He became more responsive to Priestley's volume changes that allowed him, by imitation, to play with his own power. This reflected a positive transference. At this time he could not maintain this psychological dynamic of responsiveness for long, so he reverted to the safety of his repetitious rhythmic melodic figure on the xylophone.

Perhaps Curtis' inability to tolerate intimacy and power, as he demonstrated when he stopped playing the cymbal and reverted to the xylophone, was a manifestation of his organic problems which caused him to become overwhelmed and to seek retreat to defend himself against mental or neurological overstimulation and chaos. Throughout, Curtis continued to hold himself rhythmically, as though he could not trust anyone to hold the rhythm for him. This might suggest that his early holding environment was so chaotic that he could not surrender control even though he reached out desperately to Priestley for intimacy by following her and imitating her musical expression.

Priestley found that Curtis' improvisations that were based on fantasy titles caused a release of energy and expression in his music as well as in words (2: p. 201). It is interesting that in the two examples analyzed here, the fantasy improvisation indicated a direction that would help to break through his transference of dependence and enmeshment that was entrenched in the reality improvisation. The fantasy improvisation revealed a glimpse of a musical partnership with Priestley as Curtis allowed himself to follow her lead and explore the musical elements with greater flexibility.

Period II: August 25 1978 to November 06, 1978 (11 sessions)

Images: Self is Explored Through Reality and Fantasy

Having concluded the myth based on fantasy that he created in period one, Curtis indirectly explored issues in his life that he wished to work on using titles such as *Dependence/independence* (1:8-31-78); *Love* (1:9-15-78); *Hate* (1:9-18-78); *Gateway* (1:9-25-78); and *What sort of person I am* (1:10-9-78). Following these improvisations, he developed a narrative based on images related to a boat trip. He explored his illness symbolically by entering a cave mouth and finding a bear, and he attended to his feelings when he found a horse after going through a gateway. The White Lady made an appearance in one of his trips down the river, and he engaged in creativity through play with porpoises when he dove under the water (1:10-9-78 to 10-23-78).

A more profound exploration of his psyche, symbolized by the image of a deep dive into the water in *Down under the sea* (1:10-23-78) was a continuation of the previous river theme. His last improvisation in this period explored a deserted room in a house that included the images of a harp that he played, fruit that he ate, and a window through which he saw a garden. Priestley interpreted these symbols as an indication of the feelings that he had been neglecting. In order to be able to do more in the world, he needed to be able to comfort himself more, which she felt he was doing in the images, in his life, and in the music (1:11-6-78).

Life: Reaching Out to Others and Rediscovering Interests

Curtis' speech was becoming more spontaneous and expressive, and he was able to carry on dialogue with greater ease. He still found it difficult to concentrate, could not read books, and spent his evenings at home with his parents (1:10-16-78). In therapy, he had resisted talking about anything that was difficult in his life, stating that he could only cope with pleasant things (1:8-11-78), though in this period, he began to symbolically explore biographical material related to his past in a tentative manner through images and music (1:9-18-78; 10-23-78; 11-6-78).

During this period, Curtis increased his awareness of and attention to his feelings as he worked on issues of autonomy versus dependence in the images and in the dyadic improvisations with Priestley (1:8-31-78). He maintained his job in the department store, began to attend a social skills group, and found a mutual interest in betting on horses with one of his work colleagues (1:10-30-78). It is interesting that the image of the horse, a symbol of feelings,

had made a few appearances in his improvisations by this time. His new-found excitement of betting on the horses was coincidental with “betting” on his feelings in the imagery and music.

Music: Awakening Creativity and Expression

According to Priestley, during this period, Curtis' rhythm became somewhat bolder and the melodies were more creative and adventurous, with greater expressed emotion (2: p. 205). Although change was indicated by rhythmic and dynamic alterations within the improvisations, his music played the role of a "synthetic or synthesizing function of carefully balancing and holding together his lately disintegrated psyche" (2: p. 128).

Down Under the Sea

This improvisation occurred in the twenty-seventh session that was the penultimate session in period two (1:10-23-78). In her diary, Priestley stated that Curtis engaged in creative play when he dove into the sea where he played with a porpoise, then found a wreck and some old jewelry that he brought up to the surface. She interpreted the porpoise as a representation of herself; as a porpoise, she had come under the water to meet Curtis, but she stated that he had to do the work himself. Priestley saw the wreck as a symbol of his last illness, and the jewelry as a symbol of the values that he possessed, but had not yet used. Priestley's countertransference also took on a symbolic form, that of a huge water snake, which she put into the music (1:10-23-78).

Curtis used the xylophone almost exclusively throughout the improvisation with the exception of two sections where he used the cymbal for approximately fifteen seconds each. Based on an IAP analysis, the rhythmic ground controlled the rhythmic figures in all four segments and the meter subdivision ranged from stable to variable throughout three segments. The variability of the rhythmic figure was closely related to the variability of the melodic figure, both salient elements. Segments two and four introduced a change in the melodic and rhythmic figure, while segment three was notable for the change primarily in the rhythmic figure. The phrasing was stable, and it was congruent with the rhythmic and melodic elements. While the volume was undifferentiated because Curtis did not manipulate this element to create different part relationships, he nevertheless demonstrated greater flexibility in subtle volume changes throughout the four sections. In terms of musical autonomy, Curtis continued to alternate between roles of dependent and resister, but there were moments when he took the initiative and became a partner to Priestley.

Psychodynamic Interpretation of the IAPs

Throughout this improvisation, Curtis was resolving transference issues related to trust and dependency. At times, his defensive control of his environment through rhythmic and melodic perseveration resulted in him using all his energy trying to provide his own security. He was timidly following his impulses, but he didn't yet trust himself to invest in them. He had a symbiotic relationship with Priestley (mother) in which he depended on her for his feelings in the melody and he resisted her when she tried to get him to venture beyond his known world. It

was as if he could still not trust that his environment could hold him if he allowed his attention and impulses to waver from the fixation of holding himself.

Priestley created a holding environment for Curtis while encouraging him to explore new experiences she offered in her harmonic, rhythmic and melodic space. Through a positive transference, he was able to begin to internalize the secure, holding environment that Priestley offered and follow her invitation to play with his own power in the volume changes. He began to venture out into new experiences of his identity in the cymbal, which led to an emotion that he held on to in a fixated manner. He freed himself from this fixation by developing his instinctual drives into organized, cohesive goals in the phrasing.

The final segment demonstrated that Curtis was beginning to develop his autonomy. Having experienced, to some extent, a secure internal holding environment, and having resolved some of his unconscious conflicts with Priestley, he was less fused with her and therefore less defended against her, which opened the possibility to following and leading in dynamic play with her in the volume. Thus, he began to liberate himself from having to hold on to his environment and he reduced his dependency on her. This was the meaning of Priestley's statement that though she came to meet him and play with him as a porpoise, he, alone, had to do the work of discovering his unexploited potential symbolized by the jewels he discovered during this improvisation (1).

Period III: November 20, 1978 – July 02, 1979 (29 sessions)

Images: Fantasy Evokes Memory and Serves Reality

The alternation of fantasy and reality images that had been established in the first eight months of work continued throughout this period. The deepening of Curtis' self-communication and access to his imagery supported his burgeoning engagement with life and vice-versa. During the first part of this period, Curtis' images were closely related to life issues. As a result, many improvisations were reality rehearsals⁵ in which he imagined having conversations, meeting new people, and sharing meals with others or going on outings (1:12-18-78). For example, while improvising, he thought about what to say to each person in his social skills group (1:1-15-79) and imagined conversations he might have with an old friend who had contacted him (1:3-5-79 & 3-12-79). Before moving into a hostel, he did a number of improvisations in which he imagined moving there and participating in the chores and routines of daily life (1:11-27 to 12-11-78).

After a number of reality rehearsals, Curtis' imagery again became based on fantasy. He imagined a *Volcano* (1:11-20-78), then improvised a series based on a sea voyage. He sailed to a desert island where there were no inhabitants, which Priestley interpreted as Curtis beginning to unfurl his sails as he visited a new part of himself (1:2-19-79), then he returned to the desert island to discover a spring where natives were eating and feeding fish to the parrots (1:2-26-79). In *Parrot and turtle* he imagined joining the natives to cast nets for fish (1:3-19-79). Priestley interpreted the natives and parrot as the part of him that was searching for a more meaningful

⁵ Priestley defines reality rehearsal as a technique used to confront and overcome obstacles to life goals. See Priestley, 1994, pp. 57-58.

and richer life (1:3-19-79), and stated that he possessed both a thick-skinned turtle part and a rarer, but more flamboyant parrot part that was the singing part of himself (1:2-26-79; 2: p. 140).

Following the sea voyage series, Priestley encouraged an exploration of Curtis' past life events in reality-based improvisations with titles such as *Separation* and *Autobiography* (1:5-7-79 & 6-4-79). These images evoked memories of his early vocal studies (1:5-7-79) and his time spent in France (1:6-4-79), and brought up emotions related to the loss of his wife at the dissolution of their marriage (1:5-14-79). Interestingly, after having explored these memories through reality-based titles, he began for the first time to explore images that integrated life memories with fantasy elements (1:6-11-79 to 7-30-79).

In subsequent improvisations, Curtis developed recurring images of the sailboat, water, and the voyage. These images sparked more memories of actual adventures he had had in France. He set off to sea on a moonlit night and arrived in a port where he had a meal (1: 6-11-79). He found colorful bales of cloth and perfume that he loaded on board (1:6-18-79) then sailed back to England where he exchanged the cloth and perfume for fruit (1:6-25-79), and finally, he arranged a feast with dancing (1:7-2-79). Each of these improvisations also evoked memories related to his trips and to the time he spent abroad. Priestley interpreted these images as the colorful part of himself that he had left in France that he was now going back to reclaim (1:6-18-79). She stated that the boat was a symbol of his psyche holding him together as he sailed over the sea of quiet emotion (1:6-11-79).

Life: Enacting Major Changes

Curtis made enormous changes in his life during this period of treatment in the areas of work, leisure, and interpersonal relationships. The fantasy improvisation entitled *Volcano* (1:11-20-78) brought up sad feelings of how he had lost his sense of spontaneity, and perhaps served the purpose of motivating him to break out of the monotonous patterns that he had established in his life. The first major change he enacted was that he moved out of his parents' home into a hostel (1:1-2-79). There, he met new people, cultivated a friendship with his roommate, began to cook for himself (1:11-27-78 & 6-25-79) and participated in leisure activities such as going to movies (1:1-8-79). He enjoyed doing the shared tasks of community living at the hostel and took on a part-time job as a volunteer for an elderly lady who was handicapped (1:5-7-79). Priestley noticed that he had more expression and spontaneity in his speech and body language (1:1-8-79).

Although at first he found it difficult to keep up conversations with others, he used the musical dialogue he created with Priestley and the imagined conversations during reality rehearsal improvisations to practice connecting to others emotionally and verbally (1:1-22-79). These social skills helped him to become reacquainted with an old school friend who was now a doctor, and the old friend was able to feel comfortable enough with him to maintain this relationship (1:3-12-79). His new-found confidence motivated him to go to the cinema, dinners, concerts, and art galleries both alone and with new friends from the hostel (1:4-23-79). He stated that he was once again enjoying reading (1:4-2-79). He began to renew his relationship with his niece and nephew (1:12-4-78 & 12-18-78) and experienced satisfaction in his ability to enjoy visits and a holiday with his family (1:1-2-79).

With increased awareness of his feelings, Curtis was able to articulate the aspects of his life that were unsatisfactory. He stated that he felt anxious in the morning, and often had a sense of indistinctness or “not being definite” and that he was not able to remember things, though this was much better than it had been previously (1:4-23-79). The fantasy images that followed helped Curtis to rediscover memories through association. He recounted his youthful experiences at a boarding school (1:12-4-78) and followed his memories back to his first interest in studying singing at the age of 13 (1:5-7-79). He explored images and emotions related to the loss of his wife and briefly reminisced about the time they spent together in France during his vocal studies (1:6-4-79). In these images, he began to come to terms with the unraveling of his life at the onset of his illness. It seems that the process of revisiting the difficult memories of his time spent in France through imagery based on fantasy allowed him to recover happier memories and the excitement that also belonged to that time in his life.

Music: Deepening Creativity and Expression

During this period, Curtis explored his musical ability to express his feelings about internal and external events. He became more inventive with his use of musical elements; for example, his rhythms became adventurous (1:1- 8-79) and he developed greater autonomy in his playing (1:1-15-79). He continued to use improvisations to rehearse events that would occur in his life (1:2-12-79) and also used the improvisations to re-experience the success he felt after having engaged in these life events (1:3-12-79). He created desires and goals by imagining what he wanted, for example, his "ideal home" (1:4-2 & 4-9-79).

Curtis accessed the deeper regions of his psyche with fantasy improvisations that were based on his memories of life events and on an imaginative elaboration of these events (1:6-11-79 to 7-19-79). Rather than being divorced from reality, these fantasy improvisations served the purpose of reclaiming the energy and emotions associated with his pre-morbid functioning, which stimulated his desire and awoke emotions related to his life in the present. An example of the vivid expression of emotions he experienced in the present occurred in the improvisation, *The fracas*.

The Fracas

This improvisation occurred in the thirty-seventh session (1:1-29-79). During an evening meal, Curtis and his roommate witnessed a violent exchange at the hostel that involved threats and a knife, though no one was physically harmed. Curtis chose to replay this event in an improvisation in which he and Priestley described the thematic sections as: 1) quiet eating music, 2) music depicting the argument, 3) tense eating as if nothing had happened music, 4) music that portrayed the conversation with his roommate afterwards, and 5) music depicting the conversation that took place a few days later with one of the persons involved in the fracas. The entire improvisation lasted nine minutes.

The five sections can be identified by shifts in instrumentation and playing style. Although the xylophone was predominant for all sections and was used exclusively in sections three and five, Curtis also used the drum and cymbal at various moments in the improvisation. The *eating music* consisted of cymbal and xylophone; in the *argument scene*, Curtis used the

drum almost exclusively apart from two beats of cymbal crashes. In the *eating as if nothing had happened* music, he used only the xylophone, while music that depicted the *conversation with his roommate after the event* used the xylophone, the drum, and the cymbal and drum together in three balanced segments, and in the final section, *conversation a few days later*, Curtis again used the xylophone exclusively. Priestley wrote in her diary, "it was the most expressive improvisation he'd ever done and he put much more expression into the music than into his words" (1). The animated use of the drum and cymbal with the xylophone added the dimension of timbre to the music in a dramatic way which indicated a new development in Curtis' playing.

Summarizing the improvisation in IAP terminology, the timbre and tension were the salient elements and they contributed to other musical elements with varying degrees of prominence, depending on the segment. This variability in timbre, that was used cyclically from section to section, contributed to the tension. Tension was also derived from changes in volume that created variability in the drum and cymbal timbres. The meter, subdivisions, and tempos were also all variable among sections, and programmatic changes were identified by shifts in timbre, tempo, meter, and the rhythmic or melodic figure.

In the sections that used the xylophone exclusively, Curtis used his characteristic melodic figure based on six ascending steps in a scale, but he varied the melodic figure by changing its direction or by introducing short motives based upon the main theme. He also employed variations in the tempo as well as greater variability in the rhythmic figure. The rhythmic ground was stable throughout the improvisation. In addition, Curtis developed more autonomy and became a musical partner with Priestley, both following and initiating changes in volume, tempo, phrasing, and in the rhythmic and melodic figure.

Psychodynamic Interpretation of the IAPs

Based on images emanating from a real-life event, this improvisation provided Curtis with the opportunity to explore his own character from different vantage points. Old identities and old ways of being were juxtaposed with new aspects of his character that he was discovering. For example, in the *eating as if nothing had happened* segment, Curtis played the xylophone in a rigid way reminiscent of his early improvisations to express the denial of feelings (*as if nothing had happened*), while Priestley played the repressed feelings attached to the event. This suggests that Curtis associated the rigid way he played the xylophone when he began therapy with repression or denial. The difference now was that because of his internalized experience of a secure holding environment, Curtis had the liberty of choosing to play rigidly or not while he remained congruent with Priestley's contrasting music.

Curtis' ability to create a stable rhythmic ground for himself without having to devote all his energy to the task of holding allowed him to develop the concept of object permanence and to separate from Priestley. His burgeoning sense of identity resulted in less anxiety and this gave him greater access to his emotions, freeing him to invest his energy in following his instincts in the rhythm, in recognizing his emotions and desires in the melody, and in directing them towards a goal in the phrasing and volume. Using the image of the *argument*, Curtis projected the more aggressive and powerful parts of his character onto the persona of his housemate, thereby discovering his own untapped potential for commitment, strength, and

intensity. He developed his own power through his capacity to recognize, organize, and express his feelings and instinctual energy. His impulses and emotions were organized and congruent with each other and his feelings were consistent with the intensity of his urges.

A stronger identity freed Curtis to cultivate greater intimacy in his contacts with others without having to inflexibly maintain his boundaries by blocking others out. This nascent responsiveness can be heard in the last two segments of the *fracas*. In the music, Curtis was able to leave space, listen to, support, and follow Priestley, and to respond to her spontaneously. Curtis' increased capacity for intimacy was possible because of the crystallization of his core identity through his experience of having had a secure holding environment in the musical transference. The reconstruction of Curtis' psyche fortified his ego, dissipated some of his anxiety that had been attached to defenses of repression, and freed him to become more connected to himself in the moment. The process of establishing intimacy with others and the recognition and expression of his emotions and drives continued in his work with Priestley throughout the last period of his treatment.

Period IV: July 09, 1979 to April 27, 1981 (63 sessions)

Images: Fantasy and Reality are Integrated

The last part of the treatment was a period of consolidation of gains for Curtis as he continued to integrate fantasy and reality images. Reality-based images were imbued with the richness that he formerly reserved for his fantasy improvisations and he consciously used these images to help him to concretize his wishes, to reclaim the excitement he had felt in his past, and to prepare himself psychologically to embrace a more challenging future. For example, Curtis used reality rehearsal techniques to prepare himself for a move into an apartment by improvising on images of preparing dinners (1:8-13-79); chatting with his roommate (1:8-20-79); decorating his new home (1:2-11-80); inviting guests (1:8-13-80); and putting in a garden in his new flat or apartment (1:2-18-80). He also used imagery to prepare himself for the role of being best man at his friend's wedding (1:1-7-80).

Curtis' images not only prepared him for the future, but also acknowledged the transient joys of his recent past. At the beginning of his treatment, he used fantasy to bring meaning to his life which he found uninteresting. Now, pleasant, everyday experiences, such as a walk in a public garden with a friend (1:9-3-79) or an evening at the cinema (1:1-8-79), theatre (1:10-29-79), or concerts (1:12-31-79) became a theme in improvisations that permitted him to savor the memory through the images and the music. He imagined visiting France again; this led to more memories of his previous time in France (1:1-14-80 & 1-21-80). In a reciprocal manner, new discoveries in life sometimes served as a catalyst for images, such as the improvisation on the theme of *Starry night* that was inspired by his new interest in astronomy (1:12-1-80).

As opposed to the purely concrete images or the fantasy magical thinking that typified the first period of treatment, Curtis was developing his ability to use metaphor consciously in his images. For example, a physical injury to his legs prompted improvisations based on themes of exploration of where his legs would take him (1:10-15-79 & 10-22-79). Another example of the use of images as metaphor occurred in an improvisation after Curtis saw the film *Les enfants du paradis*. He improvised on a beggar character in the movie who pretended to be disabled

though he was actually a gold expert. Priestley wondered if Curtis was communicating that he was hiding behind his illness, and brought his attention to the fact that he was now finding his identity in being a well man, which was represented by the beggar's gold treasure (1: 6-9-80). Similarly, after attending the musicals *Sleeping Beauty* (1:10-29-79) and *Cinderella* (1:1-18-81), Curtis improvised on images associated with these personas that were related to awakening and transformation, a process that he was undergoing in his life.

In the last year of therapy, Curtis consciously used images as symbols to intensify intra and interpersonal communication. In an improvisation on *Pandora's box*, he heard Hope's voice after he let out the bad objects, and decided to keep Hope in the box, which Priestley interpreted as an attempt to control his persecutory objects (1:3-31-80). After an improvisation on the image of a *Cross journey*, Curtis said that the cross was his illness; this was one of the few times that he directly expressed feelings about his illness (1:12-10-79). He also used the image of Renoir's *Girl in blue watering a plant* to express the feelings he had about his relationship with his niece (1:1-5-81). Finally, Curtis communicated that he was beginning to think about leaving therapy through an image of an uneaten meal for two people (1:10-27-80). Five months later, he expressed this more directly in an improvisation entitled *Nightscene print*, based on an image of a print he had purchased depicting a prince leaving at night (1:3-23-81).

Thus, in the final stage of therapy, Curtis used his images to increase his quality of life and to meet new challenges through reality rehearsals; he used his memory to relive pleasant daily experiences, thereby reinforcing his motivation to continue to grow; and he used images to evoke past memories that helped him to make sense of his experience, to reconnect to the qualities possessed by his pre-morbid self, and to integrate them with his present self. Curtis' psychological functioning became more abstract. He used metaphors to explore his unconscious and he used symbols to communicate with others and to intensify his intrapersonal communication.

Life: Consolidating Gains and Ending Therapy

In his life during this period, Curtis made major changes that demonstrated his growing ease with people and his increased autonomy. The reality rehearsal improvisations that he used as preparation to move into a flat with his roommate were qualitatively different from those he played in the earlier stages of therapy. For example, when Curtis was first preparing to move out of his parents' house (period three), the function of the reality rehearsals was to quell his fears and help him view the move to the hostel as an attainable goal, whereas now, his images were ego-driven with the emphasis on his desire and the confident creation of a pleasurable future (1:8-18-80).

Curtis communicated more easily and established a mature, autonomous relationship with his family, taking a vacation with them (1:8- 4-80); visiting them (1:10-15-79 & 3-31-80); and cultivating an avuncular relationship with his niece and nephew (1:3-17-80 & 10- 6-80). He reached out to people to widen his circle of friends (1:12-79; 9-22-80 & 9-29-80), and his confidence in his social skills increased to the point that he accepted weekend invitations with his old school friend, participated in joint ventures with his friend and his friend's fiancée (1:2-4-80), and efficiently carried out all the duties of best man at their wedding (1:4-28-80).

Weekends became a time for creative adventure, whereas at the beginning of treatment, they were a time of anxiously trying to fill up the hours (1:9-15-80).

He continued to work at the department store, but took on a more challenging volunteer job reading and helping to mark papers for a blind professor of French (1:5-14-80). Memories of his previous time in France revealed to him some of the things that he presently missed in his life, such as cultivating his interest in art (1:1-21-80). He wanted to have a greater knowledge of painting and he craved more clarity of thought (1:11-26-79). His memories of France (1:1-14-80) incited him to join the French Institute (1:6-16-80) and to enthusiastically pursue his interest in art with visits to galleries and purchases of prints and books on painting (1:12-31-79; 2-11-80 & 8-4-80).

Although Curtis reclaimed his memories of the years he spent in France, he resisted exploring the difficult memories both verbally and in the music (1:10-1-79 & 12-10-79). Priestley felt that Curtis could not get to a depressive position about his losses (1:4-28-80 & 5-14-80), though she noticed more fleeting expressions of both sadness and joy in his music (1:2-4-80; 3-31-80 & 10-20-80).

As he prepared for separation from Priestley and faced the end of his music-making with her, his musical pursuits became focused on attending concerts (1:1-21-80; 2-18-80 & 3-3-80) and learning to play the guitar (1:9-1-80). He used this newly acquired skill for musical expression and social interaction as he accompanied himself while singing popular songs (1:10-6-80; 1-13-80 & 1-5-81). Curtis stated that he felt he was becoming more thoughtful, better at planning, and had a "wider attitude towards life" (1:4-14-80).

In summary, during the last 22 months of therapy, Curtis worked on consolidating his gains by defining his goals, developing his creativity, and cultivating interests that would bring him a greater quality of life. Psychologically, the overall theme was that of awakening to life after illness. He gained greater access to past memories, and as he did so, he identified with his healthy, functional, and creative capacities that made it easier for him to focus on living in the present and to prepare for realistic goals in the near future. Achievement of goals and new interests gave him a sense of competence in the world. Finally, he successfully completed the tasks of separation and transition from the therapeutic relationship by finding fulfillment in the development and maintenance of his life relationships, and by bringing his music-making into a developmentally appropriate, functional sphere of life.

Music: Becoming a Musical Partner and Creating Meaning

The three recorded improvisations of this period reveal that Curtis' music became more expressive and creative. He was also acting as a musical partner with Priestley. This was evident in his autonomy and leadership in proposing musical ideas, and in the quality of his listening and sensitivity to Priestley in following her musical ideas.

Nightscene Print

This improvisation occurred in session 118 on March 23, 1981 (1). This was the third last session Curtis had with Priestley. The theme was based on a Japanese print that Curtis had bought depicting a young prince leaving at night. Priestley wondered in her diary if Curtis was

thinking of leaving therapy at that time. She also stated that this improvisation was very mysterious and unusual and that his playing was more creative (1).

An IAP analysis revealed that all the musical elements in this improvisation were salient. The timbre was salient in the opening of the improvisation when Curtis used the cymbal. However, after the first segment, he played the xylophone exclusively for the remainder of the improvisation. In the xylophone playing, Curtis began with his usual melodic figure of five ascending notes, then he proceeded to vary this theme rhythmically and melodically throughout the improvisation, creating a form of theme and variations. Curtis' expressivity was evident in all the musical elements: volume, timbre, phrasing, rhythm, and melody, which were all variable. Curtis initiated changes in tempo, volume, meter, and musical character. He was also sensitive to changes that Priestley made and complemented them, taking on a balanced role of both leader and partner. This improvisation demonstrated a significant development in sensitivity and creativity in Curtis' playing, particularly as compared to the rigid improvisations he did in period one.

The rhythmic figure, which was integrated with its ground, was variable and was more developed in character and more flexible than in previous improvisations. Tempo changes and volume changes as well as beat subdivisions and metric changes were used in a variable way for expressive ends with frequent use of rubato, accelerandos and ritardandos. The phrasing was variable as it conformed to the changes that occurred in the rhythmic ground and in the rhythmic and melodic figures. The melodic figure, which was integrated with its ground, was variable, because Curtis employed changes in melodic direction, some intervallic leaps, and melodic motives of different character and length. Accents and phrasing conformed to the variability in the rhythmic and melodic figures.

Psychodynamic Interpretation of the IAPs

It is difficult to listen to this improvisation without feeling awe at the changes in Curtis' music that had occurred since his first improvisations. The core of his identity as it was expressed in his first sessions was still heard in the ascending repetitions on a five note scale, but the rigid and perseverative theme of the early improvisations had become enriched with rhythmic and melodic variations as well as fluidly-changing dynamics. The positive transference with Priestley freed Curtis to be adventurous and to interact with her spontaneously; he was able to move both towards himself and towards her in the music. The dyadic musical relationship with Priestley had the quality of equals exchanging intimate feelings and tenderly supporting each other. Psychologically, Curtis was now able to establish intimate, authentic relationships with others, and to act in the world in a way that would fulfill his desires and advance his goals towards accomplishments.

Secure in the knowledge that his instinctual forces would not become overwhelming to him, he could organize and direct his impulses towards the achievement of personal goals and desires. Unconscious conflicts that had kept him rigidly defended and fixated were no longer blocking the energy and creativity in his life. He was able to experience the flow of energy in his body, recognize the many emotions that were carried by this flow, and express these feelings in his music. Connection to his inner life gave him a stronger sense of his identity and freed him from needing to maintain his psychological integrity by creating rigid boundaries between

himself and others. He was able to play with his own power, experimenting with using his energy to lead and create, or using it to be sensitive and responsive, while leaving space in which he could dialogue with others.

It is interesting that Curtis chose an image from a print that he had bought as the theme of this improvisation. One of the aspects of his life that had changed over the course of therapy was his renewed interest in art and music; both were passions that he had abandoned when he became ill. At the beginning of therapy, Curtis used the fantasy myth of the maiden and the romantic quest to gain access to his psychic energy and his emotions, whereas now, he gravitated towards an object which he found in the world that reflected a psychological problem that he was grappling with. Curtis used the image with its message of stealing away to help him deal with the separation from Priestley that he knew was inevitable, and also used it to communicate to Priestley that he was thinking about termination of treatment. Thus, Curtis was able to use both abstract and concrete thinking, and fantasy and reality in the service of his imagination, feelings, desires and will, with the goal of self-expression and communication in order to achieve his objective of continued growth.

DISCUSSION

Personal Bias Influencing my Approach to this Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if it was possible to see changes in Curtis' imagery and life and to hear changes in his improvised music over the course of his therapy. This purpose determined my approach to the study and it was influenced by a personal bias that changes in music or imagery should facilitate and reflect positive life changes. This bias stems from my clinical work with persons with chronic mental illness. Therefore, I was particularly interested to discover if there were parallels among the changes in Curtis' music, images, and life over time, and if so, what meaning these changes had and whether they altered Curtis' quality of life significantly. Changes related to Curtis' life and images were recorded in Priestley's diaries; however, deriving meaning from the music improvisations necessitated a method of analysis that would consistently reveal not only changes in the musical elements, but also, the symbolic significance and meaning of these changes.

In the music therapy literature, the most common approach to deriving meaning from the client's improvisations is to describe what one hears in the music in a phenomenological way and relate this to the salient aspect of the treatment that is being discussed. Because I had no direct contact with Curtis as a client, I did not have an intimate sense of his process throughout his therapy from which to draw upon. Thus, in this historical reconstruction, Curtis' recorded improvisations took on a primordial importance as the most direct link that I had with him that could help me to better understand him and his process in AMT. The written sources that I had access to – Priestley's diary entries (1) and her published chapter (2) clearly demonstrated the changes in Curtis' life events and his images, and I wondered if a systematic way of analyzing the music would yield similar detailed results.

Structural analyses used to understand the formal aspects of occidental music, whether the music is in a classical, jazz, or popular style, are useful in comprehending the composer's construction of phrase, harmony, rhythm, melody, and form. However, subjective meaning is not usually extrapolated from such analyses. For this study, in which the personal significance of the music is a vital component, I considered using a phenomenological approach that would allow me to infer meaning from Curtis' music. I was wary that without having had direct contact with Curtis, I might be unaware of a bias in my listening. Furthermore, I could not fully comprehend the context surrounding Curtis' creation of the music.

In the IAPs, each musical element is presented with a number of scales within each profile and they include clear definitions related to the quality of each musical element. Further meaning can then be derived from the application of an interpretive frame of psychodynamic concepts as applied to the musical elements. I therefore decided to use the IAPs, which provided me with a more objective structured and systematic approach with which to analyze each musical element.

I had expected that it would take considerable effort to become adept at using the IAPs and I was concerned at the interpretive skill involved in making psychodynamic interpretations. I discovered that in order to manipulate the many elements in the analytic tool of the IAPs, it was necessary for me to make subjective decisions to determine the salience of musical elements. Initially, I also found it difficult to avoid integrating a descriptive, phenomenological language into the IAP analysis, which seemed at the time to render the analysis more meaningful and therefore, more useful to me. I wondered what the structured IAP language could possibly yield in terms of making meaning of the changes in the musical elements that were brought to light by the IAP analyses of Curtis' improvisations.

Once I began to work on the psychodynamic interpretations, I discovered that I was afforded considerable clarity in grasping the essential meaning of the musical elements by virtue of having avoided phenomenological descriptions of the music. In contrast, the focused language of the profiles and scales of the IAPs as applied to the salience of each musical element revealed aspects of Curtis' music that I would not have been aware of in a more open listening approach. The psychodynamic application of the IAPs included guidelines with which to interpret each musical element within the profiles, thereby uncovering the meaning which lay at the heart of Curtis' music. Thus, with Priestley's diaries and audiotapes and the psychodynamic interpretation of the IAPs, it was possible to discover how Curtis made changes in his images, life, and music over the course of three years of therapy with Priestley.

Implications for Use of IAPs Beyond this Study

One result of having become more adept at using the IAPs during the course of this study is that they have also provided me with a new way of listening to my clients' improvised music. In turn, this has engendered a new means of understanding and making meaning of the way that a particular client uses or avoids each musical element. The acquisition of this analytical tool has provided me with an answer to a question that had long plagued me – how to listen to and analyze the clients' improvisations in a way that would provide me with some insight into their process and character and personal issues, and how to better guide the client to work out therapeutic issues in the music-making.

I have found that similar themes have been raised frequently by students in improvisation class, for example: what is the significance that making music has for the client, and how can the therapist make meaning of the client's improvisations and gain insight from them. I now find that I am teaching in a different way, calling my students' attention to a close listening to the musical elements and their meaning within the psychodynamic interpretation of the IAPs.

Ultimately, each music therapist will find his or her own answers to the question of how to make meaning of the client's music and each researcher will discover his or her unique language to present the music improvisations in a way that is significant to his or her research. Because of the discoveries I made in this study, I believe that the IAPs are an analytical tool that has the potential to provide much insight for clinicians and researchers alike. Thus, while the IAPs are not the only way to derive meaning from or to understand a client's music, they offer a structured, systematic method of analysis that goes beyond both phenomenological description and formal analysis. This implies that an introduction of the IAPs to the graduate music therapy curriculum would be useful in applications to research and clinical work by providing a systematic way to gain insight into clients' improvised music.

Changes in Images, Life, and Music in the Case Study of Curtis

The results of this study revealed that changes in all three areas did occur and that these changes were interrelated; changes heard in the music and seen in Curtis' imagery were congruent with changes that he enacted in his life. In the music, Curtis became more creative and expressive, demonstrating greater flexibility over time; he created a strong rhythmic pulse, became rhythmically inventive, and he created melodic phrases. He explored new timbres and developed greater autonomy along with an ability to interact musically with Priestley in creative ways as an equal partner.

One of the limitations of this study was the lack of recorded improvisations from session 35 (February 05, 1979) to session 115 (March 02, 1981). Clearly, there was an extended period of time during which there was no documentation of music. It was fortuitous that Priestley continued to document improvisation titles, images, and life changes in her diary entries during this time, and that she recorded the last three improvisations. These improvisations clearly demonstrated the musical changes that had taken place in the interim, and the seven extant audiotapes showed the process of gradual change that had begun in Curtis' music.

Concurrently with the musical changes, Curtis made life changes that demanded greater autonomy and that were linked to his desires and to his creativity. These changes served to motivate Curtis to make more demanding life changes. Life changes included moving into more autonomous living situations, making new friends, rekindling an old friendship, taking on new responsibilities, and renewing his relationship with family members. As Curtis developed a stronger sense of self, he pursued interests and desires that were based on aspects of his identity that he reclaimed and developed during his work with Priestley. He embarked on creative ventures such as going to concerts and galleries, taking trips abroad, learning to play the guitar, joining the French Institute, and taking on volunteer work that he found to be interesting and fulfilling.

When Priestley wrote the chapter, "Analytical music therapy and the 'detour through phantasy'" (2: pp. 199-206), she had been struck by the difference in Curtis' music when he improvised on reality as opposed to fantasy themes. Based on her reading of Heinz Hartmann's theories on ego psychology, Priestley stated that the use of fantasy in improvisations was often the only way to help her clients adapt to reality (2: p. 199). She theorized that in order for Curtis to have access to his internal drives and creativity, he first had to have greater access to his capacity for fantasy, for it was in the fantasy improvisations that Curtis was most easily able to release his energy in musical and verbal expression (2: p. 201). The use of fantasy and reality in Curtis' imagery and improvisation titles underwent a process of change during his therapy that paralleled his psychological changes and growth.

Throughout the three years of therapy, Curtis used fantasy and reality improvisations differently. At the beginning, fantasy and reality were opposed to each other; the fantasy improvisations were based on unconscious and primary process material that Curtis could not consciously interpret, while the reality improvisations were more lacking in expression than the fantasy-based improvisations. Later, Curtis consciously explored his identity through reality improvisations, while he was able to use the fantasy improvisations to make connections between his inner life and desires and his images. In the third period, fantasy was intertwined with reality in his improvisations; the fantasy contained aspects of reality and served to evoke memory and increase his sense of self and reclaim aspects of his identity rooted in the past. Finally, in the last period of treatment, fantasy and reality became fully integrated; Curtis was able to use abstract thinking; he used symbols to deepen his understanding of himself and to communicate with others.

Thus, this study led to a discovery of how images, music, and life were related for Curtis throughout his course of AMT for three years, and how the changes in Curtis' improvisations reflected the changes he made in his imagery and in his life.

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APPENDIX 1

Definition of Terms Used in IAPS⁶

Types of Relationships

- **Figure-Ground Relationships:** The ground is the basic matrix, environment, material, context, or underlying structure out which a figure is formed; the figure is the pattern, design, or entity that is created out of the ground. The figure is created to be heard against its background; it emerges from embeddedness as an independent entity to be attended. Figure-ground relationships are always simultaneous, and are most relevant to the rhythmic elements and the tonal elements. The integration profile is used to analyze figure-ground relationships.
- **Part-whole relationships:** A part is any independent voice, strand, or configuration in the music that makes up part of the whole texture of the piece, because it plays a “role” in the music such as solo or accompaniment. For example: 2+ simultaneous rhythmic parts, or melodies, or instruments, or players, or any accompaniment pattern. Simultaneous part-whole relationships form the “texture” of the piece, and are analyzed according to the various integration scales. Successive part-whole relationships constitute the “form” of the piece, and are analyzed according to the variability profile.

Levels of Relationship in Improvisation

- **Intramusical relationships:** how the elements and components within one person’s music are related to one another. Includes only within-music-within-individual relationships.
- **Intermusical relationships:** how the elements and components of one person’s music relate to the elements and components of another person’s music. Includes only between-music-between-individual relationships.
- **Intrapersonal relationships:** how parts of the self relate to one another, for example, how the musical and nonmusical selves are related, how emotions are related to behavior, etc.
- **Interpersonal relationships:** how musical and nonmusical parts of each person’s self are related to one another.

⁶ Source: Dr. Kenneth Bruscia. Overview of the Individual Assessment Profiles, July 2003. Used with permission by the author, December 9, 2005.

Rhythmic Elements

- Rhythmic Grounds: pulse, subdivision, tempo, meter
- Rhythmic Figure: rhythm pattern or theme
- Pulse: a division of time into equal, recurring segments that are marked off by equally significant events.
- Subdivision: equal divisions of the pulse into shorter temporal units.
- Tempo: the speed of the pulse.
- Meter: the organization of pulse into numerical units
- Rhythm: a sequence of sounds and silences of varying durations and emphases that relate in some way to one another and/or the rhythmic ground.

Tonal Elements

- Tonal Grounds: Modality, Tonality, Harmony.
- Tonal Figure: Melody.
- Modality: a delimitation of pitches that can be used horizontally (melodically) or vertically (harmonically). Also called “scale.”
- Tonality: the means by which pitches are organized around a tonal center or resting point.
- Harmony: A sequence of simultaneous combination of pitches (chords), which may or may not be organized according to intervals between the pitches (tertian, quartal, quintal), a modality, and/or tonality.
- Melody: a sequential arrangement of pitches that move in different directions at different intervals from one another to form a contour.

Sound Elements

- Timbre: Identity or character of music-maker.
- Volume: Power, strength, intensity, size of commitment.

Structural Elements

- **Phrase:** The syntactical and prosodic structure for melody; the physical or motoric structure for rhythm; the element which unites the physical, emotional and cognitive. The temporal-physical boundaries for feelings and ideas.
- **Texture: Fabric:** role relationships of the various musical parts, along with organizational strategies and hierarchies.
- **Register and voicing:** where parts are in relation to one another; degree of intimacy. Spatial-physical relationships between psychological parts.

The Six Profiles

- **Integration:** Reflex organization, sensorimotor coordination, physical boundaries, figure-ground and part-whole perception, perceptual illusions, impulsivity, field-dependence, emotional individuation, role boundaries. The basic well-formedness of the individual.
- **Variability:** Control issues; need for sameness or change, regression or progression, retention or invention; conservatism versus liberalism; preferred time zone; fear; ability to integrate past, present, and future. The openness of the person to the birth-death-rebirth cycle.
- **Tension:** The origin, direction, aim and impact of both psychic and physical energy; location of conflicts and methods of resolution; reveals stress and anxiety in relation to the elements and profiles.
- **Salience:** The need for attention, recognition, power, or control; the person's agenda; differentiates conscious and unconscious; hierarchy of concerns and values.
- **Congruence:** Reveals latent or unconscious conflicts.
- **Autonomy:** Awareness of self and other; identity issues, role boundaries, tolerance, aggression, need for control. Interpersonal stances are: toward self and other, toward self and away from other, toward self and against other, toward other and away from self, and toward other and against self.