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**A SURVEY OF APOLLONIAN AND DIONYSIAN TENDENCIES  
AS SEEN THROUGH OBJECT RELATIONS  
APPROACHES IN ART THERAPY**

Anastasia Mouzouris

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art Therapy

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

April 1994

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ISBN 0-315-90924-2

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## ABSTRACT

### **A SURVEY OF APOLLONIAN AND DIONYSIAN TENDENCIES AS SEEN THROUGH OBJECT RELATIONS APPROACHES IN ART THERAPY**

Anastasia Mouzouris

The principal theme of this work is Apollonian and Dionysian Tendencies as applied to art therapy theory and practice.

This theoretical discussion which consists of a synthesis of concepts derived from Greek literature, cult and myth in conjunction with psychoanalytic formulations on aesthetics and ego development was originally inspired by the work of Wilhelm Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) entitled The Birth of Tragedy (1870-1). In this controversial book, the German philologist extends the symbolic functions of the two Greek deities Apollo and Dionysos beyond their mythical roles in Greek history and presents them as driving forces in the creation of art, as well as co-existing psychological states that are shared both by the artist as well as his audience. As such, these two tendencies which were the basis of his aesthetic philosophy later became the impetus for the Romantic movement.

This thesis is an exploration of the psychological processes that these two deities symbolically represent in view of the reparative and destructive forces inherent in creative expression and ego development as seen through art therapy.

Included is case material and art work from art therapy sessions with a latency aged boy through which I intend to illustrate how this model may be used to expand upon current theoretical and practical approaches to art therapy to provide therapists with a deeper understanding of their clinical impressions.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to my Thesis Advisor and Practicum Placement Supervisor, Julia Byers, for her ongoing support and insightful recommendations that were invaluable for the realization of this work.

I would also like to thank Dr. Abby Calisch for assisting with the initial structure and format of this thesis during the graduate thesis seminar and for her role as a member of the Thesis Committee. I also wish to extend my thanks to Leland Peterson for generously agreeing to take part in this Committee.

Special thanks to my very dear friend and editor, Corinne Wile, whose exceptional editing skills, support and patience gave clarity and 'Apollonian shine' to this work.

Finally, I express my deepest gratitude to my special friend, Shawn Phillips, whose enthusiastic encouragement was essential when there seemed no end in sight.

## ***DEDICATION***

*To my parents Maria and Athanasios Mouzouris  
whose continual love and support inspired  
me in the fulfillment of my aspirations.*

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Subject Areas of Study

The principal focus of this presentation is the investigation of the mythical figures Dionysos and Apollo in ancient Greek literature, visual art and religious cults for consideration in expanding upon current practical and theoretical approaches to art therapy. My interest in inquiring into the variegated roles of these ancient deities is to acquire a greater understanding of the psychological nature of the reparative and destructive processes which they represent and that are inherent in creative expression, aesthetic appreciation and ego development as reflected in the art therapeutic experience.

The theoretical perspective that will be employed in this inquiry is rooted in a Kleinian relational-structural model. Melanie Klein (1882-1960) was a psychoanalyst born in Vienna who later became a member of the British Psycho-Analytic Society and leader of the Kleinian Group in England. (Hinshelwood, 1991). Klein illustrated in her paper, Some Reflections on the "Orestia" (1963), how the roles of mythical characters in ancient Greek tragedy and myths embody various internal processes and ego states such as: love and hate, fusion and separation; ego integration and fragmentation; destruction and reparation. This hypothesis was based upon the premise that the ancient Greek gods were "symbolic objects" that served to make manifest opposing tendencies, impulses and emotions which are expressions of the life and death instincts (Klein, 1975a, p. 298). Consequently, Klein concluded that these tendencies were to be found both in the unconscious of the infant and the creative artist and as such, provide us with

"a picture of human development from its roots to its most advanced level." (ibid).

By synthesizing Greek mythology, clinical data and current theories in art therapy with Melanie Klein's formulations on pre-oedipal and post-oedipal development, an attempt will be made to arrive at a link between variant ego states and creative expression during the latency period. To achieve this synthesis, emphasis will also be given to the "adjustment" of the ego and super-ego which can only occur in latency as a result of a strengthening of the ego when the demands of reality set in (Klein, 1975c, p. 180). This alignment is also an essential factor in the promotion of the child's relations to diverse objects, activities and sublimations during this post-oedipal period of development.

## 1.2 Exposition of Subject Areas and Thesis Statements

The adjustment of the ego and super-ego that occurs in latency is comparable to the greater reality sense and integrative character of the ego evident in the later, Olympian rituals and myths from which Apollo arose (Stokes, 1958). These Olympian cults were opposed to the excessive mysticism of chthonic beliefs which displayed Dionysian trends ensuing from a more primitive pre-oedipal ego and super-ego. Hence, the main premise that this study will explore is:

The relationship which exists between the Apollonian/Dionysian tendencies and the adjustment between the ego and super-ego in latency as postulated by Melanie Klein.

The second chapter will consist of a discussion based upon this thesis drawn from a survey of what various theorists have stated concerning ego integration and sublimation in view of Greek mythology, aesthetic appreciation and creative

expression.

These psycho-analytic formulations on sublimation and the psychology of the artist will then be integrated with the artistic impulses that Apollo and Dionysos represented in the writings of Wilhelm Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900).

In his work, The Birth of Tragedy (1870-71), the German philologist redefined and extended the function of these two deities beyond their actual roles in Greek history and presented them as "artistic energies" or "driving forces" in the creation of art (Sallis, 1991, p. 17).

Nietzsche viewed Apollo, for example as the god of "shine", who beautifies all that is unacceptable in real existence as well as in the inner world of phantasy (Sallis, 1991, p. 26). Furthermore, Apollo, the "far-shooting god", is representative of "contemplative distance" whereby through the illusion of images, man can gaze upon horrific content without excessive emotion or denial since it is perfected in form (ibid). As a state or creative impulse, the Apollonian will be associated here with a more mature ego, the acceptance of loss and the perception of a whole object that is distanced or separated from the self.

Dionysos, on the other hand, is the "masked god" whose identity is revealed only through a process of "dismemberment" whereby the boundaries of the self are obliterated (Sallis, 1991, p. 19). According to Nietzsche's construction, the Dionysian creative impulse requires that the individual undergoes a loss of self, which follows when one is confronted with terror, suffering and trauma. The Dionysian state and artistic impulse may also, therefore, be analogous to the excessive splitting that the ego undergoes when depressive anxiety cannot be

tolerated and reversion to the paranoid schizoid position occurs.

It is only through the acceptance of the loss of self that there is once again a "re-instatement" of the wholeness of self as in the rebirth of Dionysos after his dismemberment by the Titans (Sallis, 1991, p. 49). Although Nietzsche held that the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies were, for the most part, opposed to one another, he also saw them as re-uniting in Attic tragedy (oid).

In chapter three, the ancient Greek tragedy, "The Bacchae" written in approximately 407-408 B.C. by Euripedes, will be discussed since it exemplifies the harsh effects of early objects in the super-ego which are made manifest in themes of revenge, excessive guilt and punishment. These themes, personified by Dionysos and that evolve from excessive pre-oedipal states characterized by manic defenses, oral sadistic phantasies and fear of punishment, will be used to illuminate and expand upon clinical material derived from art therapy sessions with a latency aged boy.

The pre-genital phantasies contained in The Bacchae and that were also made manifest in the clinical material due to the influence of a primitive, pre-oedipal super-ego, will be contrasted with the later, Olympian cults and myths that show evidence of a more mature integrating character of the ego and a mitigation of the harshness of the super-ego. These developments in ancient Greece resulted from that culture's increased reality sense, which in turn, helped to achieve the "adjustment" of the ego and super-ego that is comparable to a similar alignment of these two structures in the psyche of the latency aged child (Stokes, 1958, p. 5). Subsequently, the Greeks began to seek ideals such as moderation and balance to encourage a state of harmony for the individual and society and this quest led to

the Olympian myths, lyrical poetry as well as the beauty of classical form that Apollo typically represents and which "epitomize the sublimation of unconscious phantasy" (Stokes, 1958, p. 39).

The case material presented in this chapter will demonstrate the dynamics that occur in the latency period as they related to Apollonian/Dionysian tendencies in the hope of providing art therapists with a deeper understanding of these internal processes and of their clinical impressions.

To achieve this synthesis, the art therapy data reviewed will consist of: the vacillations observed between Klein's two developmental positions in infancy and the accompanying mechanisms of defense (i.e. idealization; omnipotent control; projective identification, etc.); the use of various media; the form and content of artwork; transference and counter-transference in the therapeutic relationship.

In addition, an attempt will be made to reveal, through this clinical data, how ego integration and sublimation can be encouraged by a non-threatening environment which supports the prohibitions of the super-ego (Klein, 1975c).

The subsidiary statements that will, therefore, be addressed in this chapter include:

- The art produced during this post-oedipal period is under the influence of either the Apollonian or Dionysian tendencies.
- These tendencies can be identified by means of a Kleinian object-relations theoretical discussion of the form and content of artwork, the use of various media and the therapeutic alliance.

Chapter four will consider the relevance and implications of Apollonian/Dionysian tendencies in art therapy. The themes that were surveyed throughout this presentation will be further clarified in this section and an effort will be made to link these findings to existing literature on art therapy theory and practice, in the hope to expand upon these theoretical perspectives, particularly in view of art therapy with latency aged children.

Specific emphasis will be given to the adjustment of the ego and super-ego in latency which is sometimes referred to as "the successful outcome of psychoanalytic treatment" (Stokes, 1958, p. 5). This alignment of the two structures of the psyche is particularly relevant in therapeutic work with latency aged children since their dependence upon a figure representative of the super-ego in the outside world, to assist in diminishing fear of destructive id impulses, is stronger at this period of development than at any other (Klein, 1975c).

### 1.3 Methodology and Limitations

The influence of the primitive versus mature super-ego in sublimation and ego development will be discussed through the examination of the symbolic roles of Dionysos and Apollo in Greek mythical literature and religious cults in conjunction with Kleinian object-relations theory. One limitation expected from this methodological approach is that although this is a theoretical work based upon the reflections of various theorists from several areas of study, such as Greek mythology, psychoanalysis and the philosophy of aesthetics, there is little data available on these subjects in current art therapy literature. Furthermore, the art therapy colour reproductions and verbatim were derived from short-term art therapy with one client rather than a large population. As such, this clinical

material is not aimed at arriving at a proof of theory nor predictive findings.

#### 1.4 Anticipated Contribution

With the summary of the ideas on sublimation and ego development that will be brought forth in this thesis, it is anticipated that further areas of study will be revealed to the reader, but which will not be fully developed here due to the delimitations of this work. A discussion of these related areas will be presented in the conclusion by providing a framework for expanding upon the theoretical and practical applications of Apollonian/Dionysian tendencies in the discipline of art therapy for future study.

## CHAPTER II

### **APOLLONIAN AND DIONYSIAN TENDENCIES AND THE EGO: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS DESCENDING FROM ANCIENT GREECE TO CURRENT PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACHES IN ART THERAPY**

#### 2.1 The Function of Myth in Psychoanalysis

Prior to expounding the various theoretical constructs that will be surveyed in this chapter and which will also be referred to in and throughout the presentation, I wish to state some of the considerations which prompted me to investigate ancient Greek myths and cults. My original interest in researching fifth century Greece and particularly the ancient Greek deities Apollo and Dionysos, was primarily inspired by a desire to uncover the roots of my own Greek heritage. Another reason that I favoured Greek mythology to the stories of gods and goddesses in different cultures may have been a result of my preference for psychoanalytic theoretical models during my training as an art therapist. For example, Sigmund Freud was the first theorist to utilize the dramatic myth of Oedipus within this framework, which later became prototypical of the conflicts and dynamics that occur in relationships and development. This "functional" use of the myth, developed originally by Freud and then also by Carl Gustav Jung in his archetypal psychology, was aimed at transforming clinical impressions of clients into thoughts as well as expressing and illuminating what may be repressed or latent in the human psyche (Hubback, 1990, p. 11).

Hence, the deeper I delved into the variegated roles of gods, goddesses, heroes and heroines, in Greek literature and religious beliefs, the more I became aware of the diverse psychological and artistic forces that they personified. Yet,



many difficulties could arise in linking psycho-analytic concepts to the mythical histories or attributes of these figures in the effort to understand psychological issues. One such difficulty that has been noted by psychoanalytic commentators themselves, is that the roles of ancient characters in myths, epic poetry and drama, cannot be regarded merely in terms of the mental states that they represent. This approach, which originated with Freud in his investigation of literature and aesthetics, has also been criticized by historical scholars since it may lead to an attempt to arrive at the true or hidden meaning of a work of art and which therefore excludes other interpretations (Parson, 1990). Although the main theme of this study is focused upon the varying ego states and the creative or destructive forces that Apollo and Dionysos could symbolically represent in the psychology of the infant and of the creative artist, this interpretation does not necessarily ignore other meanings which may be attached to these mythological deities and which will also be shown in the unfolding of their histories.

Another difficulty that may ensue if the functions of mythical characters are oversimplified by means of psychoanalytic constructs, which was pointed out by the psychoanalyst T.M.C. Parson (1990), is that these characters may then come to represent only psychological processes, in a similar manner that the gods once personified the forces of nature in Greece. This notion, if taken to its extreme, could result in something as meaningless as the ancient Greek poets and dramatists were not writing about epic heroes or their divinities but about defence mechanisms and internal states. Conversely, it would also be inaccurate to assume that one can analyze historical personages as real people, like the patients that we meet in a therapeutic session and not as products of a culture or as creations of an artist (ibid).

Consequently, in view of the above mentioned intricacies, the question arose that, if mythological characters in Greek poetry and drama cannot be regarded as real people with an internal psychic existence, nor simply as symbolic presentations of mental states, then how could psychoanalysts contribute to the understanding of the psychological issues which underlie Olympian and chthonic myths as well as the dramatic works of the ancient poets? After all, it was noted by psychoanalytically oriented theorists, that the ancient playwrights and poets not only present us with an accurate clinical picture of psychological conflicts (Parson, 1990) but similarly, with psycho-dynamic viewpoints of the internal processes inherent in artistic creation and in madness (Simon, 1978). These findings may in turn, be applied to the defining, structuring and illumination of clinical data.

## 2.2. Mythical Figures in the Internal World

One way of dealing with dramatic and mythical characters from a psychoanalytic perspective that has been suggested by Parsons (1990), is to respond to them "*as though*" they were people with an unconscious (p. 36). That is, even if the mythical figures lack personal histories or internal worlds, the reason that we identify with them at all is because we respond to the "illusion" of some disguised or unconscious aspect of the personality, which is similar to the imperceptible facets of our patients' personalities, revealed only over the course of the therapeutic experience (ibid). These illusions whereby the audience identifies with mythological characters will be explored in the light of objects which exist in the internal and external world of the individual and that contribute to their phantasized or real relationships.

Understanding the nature and origin of internal objects through a theoretical

discussion of primitive processes in infantile development is particularly relevant to this study since similar mechanisms are also inherent in the formation of the super-ego and the ego; personification in play; symbol formation and sublimation. These subject areas will be expanded upon presently with regard to the Apollonian/Dionysian tendencies as well as in the subsequent analysis of case material derived from art therapy sessions with an eleven year old boy. Attention will be given to the mechanism identification since it is a contributing factor in ego development and in the adoption to the demands of the external world in latency and pre-puberty (Klein, 1975c).

Through this process, a variety of skills, characteristics and defenses are acquired that result from identifications with internalized imagos assimilated in the ego (Heimann, 1942, as cited by Hinshelwood, 1991). The prevalence of this mechanism in latency and pre-puberty is observable in children's dramatic play where they assume roles from a myriad of idealized or hostile figures derived from literature, films or imagination. This preoccupation with dramatic role playing, as with the phantasy characters that appear in their artwork, is an effort to separate out and define reality from their inner world as well as to distinguish the self from external objects (Klein, 1975c).

A comparison can be drawn between childrens' playful exploration and identification with various roles in their dramatic play, and the use of the mask during the Dionysian festival in ancient Greece. The mystery of the mask in Attic tragedy, which simultaneously reveals and conceals the identity of the bearer and of the masked god himself, Dionysos, will be elaborated upon further at a later point, in conjunction with clinical data. But for the moment, I wish to return once again to the mechanism of identification in order to examine more closely,

Melanie Klein's formulations on this process.

- Projection, Introjection and Projective Identification

In her work, On Identification, which was originally written in 1955, Klein dealt with the primitive mechanisms that influence both the infant and the adult by analyzing the character of a story "as if" he were a real person (Klein, 1975a, p. 152). Her interpretation of this work by the French novelist Julian Green (1950), was primarily aimed at exemplifying processes such as projection, introjection and projective identification, which according to Klein, are manifest in this tale, due to the author's profound understanding and presentation of the character's unconscious world.

In the introduction to the interpretation of this story, Klein focuses on identification since it contributes to the development of the super-ego and to the child's relations with its internal and external objects. She refers to this mechanism as the "common ground" whereby the infant senses a connectedness to the object as a result of attributing some of its own qualities to it through projection (Klein, 1975a, p. 173). By placing some element of its emotions, thoughts or impulses into another person and then re-introjecting them, an identification is arrived at which in turn, leads to empathy and an understanding of reality analogous to placing oneself "into the other person's shoes" (ibid).

Furthermore, the infant's internal world and the nature of its objects are also created in this manner. Internalized objects that interact with the ego, are coloured by the infant's own hostile or persecutory projections if the ego is ungratified, or experienced as protective and loving when the infant receives satisfaction from the

external world. Hence, the mother or more specifically her breast, is the primary object for projective and introjective processes (Klein, 1955).

A similar sympathetic identification has been noted in an audience's empathic response to the characters of dramatic performances by commentators from as far back as Aristotle in the fifth century (Simon, 1978), to more recent theorists such as Nietzsche (1956/1871) and Freud (1956/1905). Observing and comprehending this complex phenomenon of identification within the therapeutic alliance is also relevant since, in some ways, the therapist could be considered an audience of one, while the patient, particularly if it is a child involved in dramatic play, enacts various roles stemming from identifications with internalized objects (Simon, 1978). Consequently, without this mechanism, a therapeutic relationship could not be achieved, nor would changes in the personality come about (Hinshelwood, 1991).

At this point, it is important to stress the distinction that Klein referred to between identification through projection that is "excessive" and arises during the third or fourth month of life in the paranoid schizoid position, and the true empathy which evolves due to pity and love towards the object, in the second quarter of the first year when depressive anxiety predominates (Hinshelwood, 1991, p. 184). In the former position, due to the intensity of persecutory anxiety, hostility and destructiveness, as well as a weak and unintegrated ego, real empathy is inhibited and projective identification increases. Klein describes this excessive identification through projection as a means by which parts of the self are split off and projected "onto (or rather into)" the external object with the aim of omnipotently controlling the other and as a defense against the painful experience of separating from the object (Klein, 1975a, p. 143).

Excessive projective identification leads to a blurring of the boundaries between the self and the object which impairs the perception of reality resulting in feelings of disintegration and a confusion between the internal and external worlds (Klein, 1975a). Although these states of fusion are a part of normal development, if the intensity of destructiveness and hate do not mitigate, a pathological form of projective identification ensues. This merging of subject and object will be compared here to the ecstatic states of fusion or *mania*, that the votaries of Dionysos underwent when they became one with the god. Similarly, the accompanying splitting of the ego and feelings of disintegration which result from these fusion states, will be linked with the dismemberment that Dionysos himself experienced in the hands of the chthonic Titans.

Yet prior to elaborating upon these mythical themes, it is necessary to describe what occurs in the second quarter of the first year when depressive anxiety sets in. According to Klein, if depressive anxiety can be tolerated and is worked through successfully, ego integration is greater and projective identification decreases. A clearer perception of reality follows and this greater reality sense, along with the realization of the existence of a whole and separate object in the external world, leads to feelings of empathy, concern and a need to restore the internalized object which was previously destroyed in phantasy. The guilt arising due to the harm done to the internal object as well as the need to restore it in the ego, underlies all sublimations and positive object relations. These occurrences which take place in the depressive position will be linked here with the Apollonian tendency which requires the inhibition of excessive states and moderation.

### 2.3 Dionysian Ecstasy: The Dissolution of Boundaries

Thus far, I have placed considerable emphasis on identification through projection since this primitive mechanism, along with its complimentary process, introjective identification, if used excessively, will result in a dissolution of the boundaries between subject and object, leading to a state of fusion. These confusional states, as previously mentioned, are prevalent in both the infant's earliest relations to the breast during the paranoid schizoid position, as well as in the rapturous states of ecstasy or *mania* experienced by the devotees of Dionysos when they communed with the god (Rohde, 1925). By delving deeper into some of the aims, impulses and phantasies underlying projective and introjective identification, I arrived at additional affinities between these primitive processes and the dissolution of identity associated with Dionysian ecstasy.

The Greek word *ekstasis* is defined in Liddell and Scott's Greek English Lexicon (1991), as a state in which a being is impelled or put out of its place, mind or senses. This transcendence of the boundaries that circumscribe the self occurred when the "Mad" god, Dionysos, entered into and took possession of men.

Ecstasy was, therefore, a divine state of inspiration (*enthousiasmos*) or of madness (*mania*) in which an identification with the god occurred. By taking Dionysos into himself, man was brought closer to the irrational, intuitive and instinctive in human nature (Roberts, 1975). This deity, also known to the ancient Greeks as "Dionysos the Loosener" (*Lysios*) or "Dionysos the Liberator" (*Eleutherous*) was both the source and the cure of madness (Segal, C., 1982, p. 22). He was also known to release the individual from the limits of civic order, traditional religion, family bonds, personal morality, and even sexual identity

(Segal, C., 1920). In other words, Dionysian ecstasy required that man became god-like himself (ibid).

But an identification with this deity did not imply simply becoming the god of wine as he later came to be known in Rome and Alexandria. Instead, as Professor F.R. Dodds explains, Dionysos was:

The Power of the tree: the blossom-bringer: the fruit-bringer: the abundance of life. His domain is not only the liquid fire in the grape, but the sap thrusting in a young tree, the blood pounding in the veins of a young animal, all the mysteries and uncontrollable tides that ebb and flow in the life of nature (Dodds, 1960, p. 12).

In the nineteenth century, Dionysian ecstasy was revisited by theorists such as Nietzsche (1871) and Erwin Rohde (1891) who became interested in the force of this tendency which had the capacity to free man from those restrictions imposed by civilization and by man's own rationality, bringing him closer to his untamed passions. The term 'Dionysiac' was coined at this time, which later became the impetus for the whole Romantic movement (Roberts, 1975). In modern terms, due to the empirical discoveries of Freud and his successors, the dissolution of boundaries between self and object which occurs in Dionysian ecstasy can be defined as:

The exceeding of the limit by which one's individuality would be delimited, by which the self would be defined and constituted as an interior space of self possession. Such exceeding is thus a disruption of determinate selfhood, a certain loss of self (Sallis, 1991, p. 56).

A fundamental aspect which is central to both the fusion states described in Dionysian legends as well as those confusional states resulting from excessive



projective and introjective identification is: "possession by oral means" (Roberts, 1975, p. 36). From a psychoanalytic perspective, confusional states ensuing from these primitive mechanisms are the result of the infant's greedy oral-sadistic attacks on the object. For example, introjective identification which interacts with projective identification from the beginning of life, commences with cannibalistic phantasies of biting, sucking, devouring and scooping out the mother's breast. These "vampire-like" impulses and phantasies interfere with the infant's ability to distinguish itself from the other since incorporative phantasies lead to an identification where the external object *becomes* a part of the subject's inner world (Klein, 1975a, p. 68). One consequence of excessive introjective identification is that the ego comes to be totally possessed and dominated by the inner object and does not simply acquire some of its characteristics as it might in the type of real, empathic identification described earlier (Meissner, 1980).

The complimentary process, projective identification also stems from cannibalistic phantasies which are linked with anal-sadistic ones (Klein, 1975a). Here, the ego enters and takes possession of the external object by expelling bad parts of itself into it. In this manner, the object then becomes the "bad self", the ego is weakened and an aggressive form of object relations follows (Klein, 1975a, p. 69).

The dissolution of boundaries that occurs through the expulsion and incorporative phantasies serves as a defense against separation and persecutory anxiety. Thus, by expelling bad parts of the self into the other, the infant develops the illusion that it is omnipotently controlling those unwanted parts (Sandler, 1987). Similarly, through introjective identification, the infant incorporates the bad object leading to an "identification with the persecutor" (Sandler, 1987, p. 20).

The last point that needs to be mentioned concerning these primitive processes, is that it is not solely the bad parts of the self which are affected by expulsion and incorporative phantasies, but the good parts as well. If good parts of the self are excessively projected into the internal object, it becomes idealized and the ego is once again, impoverished. Furthermore, when persecutory anxiety is too strong, the ego may develop an over-dependence on the external idealized object, or it may take flight to the idealized internal one. Melanie Klein (1935) considered this flight to the idealized internal object which was acquired through introjection, as comparable to a denial of separation and therefore, of reality that she referred to as "mania" (Klein, 1975b, p. 278). Omnipotence, denial and idealization are also manic defenses involved in protecting the subject from over-dependence on the good loved object as well as the painful feelings of loss associated with the depressive position. Although I have only briefly touched upon these mechanisms here, in the subsequent chapter they will be illuminated by a presentation of Euripides' The Bacchae, that according to some psychoanalytic writers, symbolically presents us with the conflicts that exist in the infant's inner world (Roberts, 1975). Vignettes and colour reproductions will also be included to illustrate how these primitive processes may manifest in an art therapy session.

#### 2.4 Pre-Oedipal Trends in Dionysian Myth and Cult

Physical possession by oral means of the idealized divine object was also integral to the ecstatic, orgiastic rites of Dionysian mystery cults (Roberts, 1975). In Dionysian legends, it is often recounted how dismemberment (*sparagmos*) and eating raw (*omophagia*) of the god originally, perhaps in the form of human victim but later in an animal substitute were the magical means by which man became

possessed and identified with Dionysos. In the account of the gods' birth, the infant, Dionysos, due to his stepmother Gaea's (Earth) jealousy, was rended apart and eaten by her children, the Titans - indicating that the infant is the first object to be attacked and devoured (ibid).

In Kleinian terms, this myth may, therefore, present us with the most primitive sadistic impulses and phantasies of the infant's earliest experience. It reveals the mother as a persecutory, envious and destructive object which is the result of the infant's own greed, envy and oral sadism projected onto her. When projection is followed by the process of identification, which blurs the boundaries between subject and object, the mother is then perceived as the bad object (Roberts, 1975).

Blood sacrifice, persecution and infanticide were not only central to Bacchic cult practices but were also prevalent throughout the legendary history of this deity. For example, in Thrace, King Lycurgus, who persecuted the infant Dionysos and his nursemaids, the Maenads, was in turn, driven mad by the god which caused him to execute his own son, Dryas with an axe (Roberts, 1975). This tale of resistance to Dionysos followed by punishment, persecution and fierce destruction, is also apparent in the legend of the Argive women, in Argos, who due to their opposition to the god, also destroyed their own children. Similarly, in Boeotia, the three daughters of Minyas, after neglecting worship of Dionysos, were driven into a state of manic frenzy resulting in the rending to pieces of one of their sons (Roberts, 1975). However, the most outstanding account of violent aggression towards children ensuing from Dionysian possession is provided in Euripides' The Bacchae. Here, once again, due to opposition to Dionysos, Agave in a state of frenzied mania, leads a group of wild Maenads in hunting down,

dismembering and perhaps even devouring her own son Pentheus (Dodds, 1960).

As mentioned earlier, each of these tales involves rejection of Dionysos, who according to Patrick Roberts (1975) represents the entire primitive component of the psyche. Resistance to the god may also entail what professor E.R. Dodds (1940) has described as repression. He states:

To resist Dionysos is, to repress the elemental in one's own nature; the punishment is the sudden complete collapse of the inward dykes when the elemental breaks through perforce and civilization vanishes (p. 37-38).

It is important to remind the reader that although these interpretations of Dionysian possession have thus far centered primarily on the effect it has on adult men and women, in The Bacchae, it is the child-king Pentheus who comes to be possessed due to his excessive repression of destructive primitive instincts (Roberts, 1975). The danger of this situation as described in the preceding citation is that Pentheus by exceeding those bounds which delimit civilization, acts out uncontrollable aggression which was previously repressed. My reason for choosing Euripides' mythical version of Dionysian possession over others, is that it effectively illuminates the various conflicts of control and opposition to authority typical of latency and pre-puberty aged children. These developmental issues revealed in The Bacchae, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, are particularly relevant to the presentation of clinical data derived from sessions with a child who was referred to art therapy due to his inability to control aggressive acting-out behaviour. His violent outbursts resulted in increasing his feelings of being persecuted by figures of authority (i.e. teachers, parents, etc.) while they in turn struggled to provide him with the external containment

necessary for his integration into the social codes and behaviours of a regular school setting. This "civilizing" or taming of instinctual impulses was, according to Freud, one of the primary aims of sublimation during the latency period (Freud, 1985/1921, p. 173).

## 2.5 The Ambivalent Nature of the Dionysian

So far, the myths and legends presented here have primarily brought attention to the persecutory and violent aspects of Dionysian possession, but there also existed a more gentle tendency which needs to be revealed. Here, once again, it is Euripides' portrayal of the Bacchic Maenads on the hillside outside of Thebes, that provide us with the most explicit depiction of Dionysian enchantment. These devotees of the god, when not provoked or intimidated, were united with nature. For example, they were portrayed as magically drawing forth milk, honey or wine from the earth with their *thyrsus* (a wooden staff that can also be used as a missile or weapon when they feel threatened). At other times, they were illustrated nurturing young wild animals that suckled at their breast (Sallis, 1991). These peaceful images, when brought together with those previously described entailing the horrors of *sparagmos* (tearing apart of the victim) and *omophagia* (devouring raw of the animal), evidence how Dionysian enchantment may on the one hand, bring one closer to the life sustaining energies of the earth, while on the other hand, may result in the most aggressive violence acted out towards man and beast alike (May, 1982). Consequently, professor Dodds has referred to this polarity as "Black (or) White Maenadism" (1940, p. 47).

An analogy can now be drawn between this dual nature of the Maenads and the ambivalence that Klein describes the infant feels towards the primary object.

In its earliest experiences, due to the primitive mechanism's of splitting, projection and introjection, the infant perceives the breast as either nourishing, benign and loved or malignant and persecutory (Klein, 1975a).

However, it is not solely those *entheous* (with the god in them) that possess these contradictory qualities. Dionysos also embodied a similar ambiguous duality which the deity himself, brought to the attention of Pentheus in the following statement: "And he shall know the son of Zeus, Dionysos: who, though most gentle to mankind, can prove a god of terror irresistible." (P. Vellacott, 1954, p. 208 as cited by Roberts, 1975, p. 37-38). This passage describes the paradoxical nature of the god who contains within himself opposing traits such as: mildness and wrath; omnipotence and vulnerability; madness and cure; male and female; beauty and horror; creativity and destruction (Segal, C., 1982). In short, this god, in his very essence, personifies ambivalence (Roberts, 1975).

Another way of understanding this ambivalence or duality of the deity is to perceive him as a "symbolic object" or "a part object" that contains the most primitive emotions, impulses and phantasies of the infant's inner world (Klein, 1975a, p. 298). Klein explains in her paper Some Reflections on the Orestia (1963) that the ancient Greek deities, as well as the various heroes and characters of tragedy, were symbolic objects that derive from the same primitive impulses which drive the infant to create part objects. This primary attempt at symbol formation which occurs during the paranoid schizoid position, ensues when the infant attaches the whole gamut of its emotions resulting from oral frustration or satisfaction, into its first part object, the mother's breast. Klein also considered this primitive drive to create symbols as the underlying force of all symbol formation and sublimation in artistic creation.

The areas of creativity and sublimation will be examined in greater detail at a later point in conjunction with the Apollonian tendency. For the moment, I wish to return once more to those primitive mechanisms which contribute to the ambivalence which Dionysos personifies. As was noted by E.R. Dodds (1960), in his introduction to The Bacchae: "Dionysos is beyond good or evil, for us... he is what we make of him." (p. 45). Although Dodds is a professor of Greek history and not a psychoanalyst, what he may be presenting here are those same primitive processes of projection, introjection and identification which are described herein as being at the root of Dionysian ambivalence. Underlying each of these processes, is the primitive defence of splitting the object into idealized or persecutory parts and it is this splitting mechanism which is considered here as being the primary contributing factor that gives rise to the dual nature of the god.

One reason that the nascent ego splits the object which has already been mentioned earlier, is a result of the infant's bodily sensations of satisfaction or frustration. It follows that the retaliatory bad object which has been identified in this thesis with the persecutory aspect of Dionysos, is the result of the infant's envious, sadistic attacks on the breast which it perceives as withholding nourishment and rather than simply taking nourishment from the breast, the infant devours it in phantasy, then damaging and destroying it. In turn, this leads to fear and retaliation from the object which has suffered this fate (Roberts, 1975).

The idealized object on the other hand that was previously linked to the gentler side of Dionysos, results when the infant, after splitting the object into good and bad parts, projects or denies the existence of the bad parts. Consequently, from the early ego's point of view, only the idealized good object

survives while all its bad aspects are obliterated (Rosenfeld, 1983, as cited by Hinshelwood, 1991, p. 131).

Idealization, furthermore, leads to a denial of separation from the good object which defends the ego against feelings of abandonment. This blissful union with the idealized object has been referred to by Hanna Segal (1983) as the "narcissistic state" or "narcissistic position" in which there exists a blurring of the boundaries between subject and object (Segal, H., as cited by Hinshelwood, 1991, p. 356). This narcissistic state, unlike Freud's narcissistic stages of development, can recur whenever excessive identification through projection or introjection are in effect. It is this dissolution of boundaries and the blissful union with the object which subsequently leads to a loss of the ability to distinguish phantasy from reality that earlier in this chapter was associated with Dionysian ecstasy.

## 2.6 Apollo and Dionysos as Symbolic Representations of the Super-ego

The infant's ability to discriminate reality from its internal phantasy world was for Klein a major factor not only in the development of perception, a consistent sense of identity, and the advancement of more stable boundaries, but the basis for the structuring of the personality as a whole. It follows that through the primitive mechanisms of projection, introjection and identification, the formation of the psychic structure, the super-ego, also commences as the infant moves from the paranoid schizoid to the depressive position (Hinshelwood, 1991).

Although Klein was for the most part, loyal to Freud's structural model, her view of the nascent ego's ability to relate to objects from as early as postnatal life, led her to conclude that the ego was in existence and functioning from birth



onwards. Accordingly, she arrived at the distinction between the early ego and primitive objects, both of which have the tendency to split and fragment and the more mature ego whose main function is to integrate itself and assimilate its imagos (Hinshelwood, 1991). However, this postulation also influenced her views on super-ego development which differed from Freud's classical theory in three significant ways (ibid).

- The Harshness of the Super-ego

Firstly, Freud held that the super-ego commences to form in the fourth or fifth year when the father or both Oedipal parents are introjected and identified with. Klein, on the other hand, believed that the formation of the super-ego commences in the third or fourth month of life when the infant identifies with numerous introjected objects that are either excessively severe or good. This divergence of opinions concerning the time that the super-ego originates is important since according to the Kleinian view, the harshness of the super-ego is far greater during pre-genital phases when oral and anal sadistic impulses predominate. Hence, in 1929, Klein wrote:

The imagos adopted in this early phase of ego development bear the stamp of the pre-genital instinctual impulses, although they are actually constructed on the basis of the real Oedipus object... these early levels are responsible for the fantastic imagos which devour, cut to pieces, and overpower and in which we see a mixture of various pre-genital impulses at work. Following the evolution of the libido, these imagos are introjected under the influence of the libidinal fixation points. But the super-ego as a whole is made up of various identifications adopted on the different levels of development whose stamp they bear (Klein, 1929, p. 204, as cited by Hinshelwood, 1991, p. 99).

Accordingly, alterations in the "quality" of the super-ego occur as the child moves from pre-genital to genital stages (Hinshelwood, 1991, p. 99). In the Oedipal phase for example, the severity of the super-ego diminishes and a more protective and moral character develops, which is influenced by the internalization of the actual external parents rather than the fantastically ideal or severe figures of the child's inner world (ibid).

In pre-genital stages, on the other hand, due to the oral sadistic incorporation (introjection) of the object resulting from oral and anal sadistic impulses of cutting, biting, tearing, burning, devouring, etc., the pre-Oedipal super-ego takes on a much harsher quality. Furthermore, this primitive sadistic super-ego persecutes the young child with dreadful feelings of punishment or retaliation for the harm done to the object. The harsh pre-Oedipal super-ego which forms under the influence of these impulses will therefore be associated in this thesis with the Dionysian tendency since Dionysos, personifies the whole primitive element of the psyche (Roberts, 1975).

Adrian Stokes, in Greek Culture and the Ego (1958) refers to the cruel, oral-sadistic character of the pre-genital super-ego as its "maternal aspect" which he considers lies at the root of Bacchic worship (p. 24). He then sets the maternal quality of the primitive super-ego in opposition to the milder "paternal" super-ego of the later Olympian gods (p. 34).

This distinction is based upon the Kleinian view that in early infancy, during the paranoid-schizoid position, the weak ego that is still unable to perceive whole and separate objects, has the tendency to interchange the phantastically severe or ideal imagos of the super-ego with the real primary object, the mother.

Stokes compares this enveloping tendency, arising from the oral incorporation and identification with the primary object, to the oral nature of Bacchic rituals where the devotees ingested the god thereby becoming him. These Dionysian enveloping states were rejected by the more cultivated and morally enlightened citizens of the city and regarded as *barbaros* (foreign or unintelligible) and *hubris* (insolence arising from the omnipotent belief that one could become a god) (Liddell & Scott, 1991).

Such excessive sentiments were also in opposition to the laws of the Olympians of which Apollo was the divine authority. These laws called for contemplative distance, temperance and the observation of limit reflected in the Delphic maxims "know thyself" and "nothing too much" (Guthrie, 1955, p. 183).

Conversely, the more protective and moral, paternal super-ego which according to Stokes influenced the four Greek virtues of temperance, courage, justice and wisdom, is acquired when the infant, upon entering the depressive position, becomes aware of whole and separate objects and particularly of the father in the outside world (Stokes, 1958). Early Oedipal tendencies also arise at this time and the severity of the super-ego diminishes since friendlier imagos are introjected. For example, the introjection of a good mother leads to the formation of a kind father imago because the infant will now equate the good breast with the good penis (Klein, 1975c).

These changes in the character of the super-ego due to the introjection of friendlier objects also comes about owing to the strengthened ego's growing ability to discern reality. As a result, the introjection of phantastically severe or idealized part objects is mitigated and punishment from the super-ego is experienced as a

guilt rather than over-whelming fear. The sense of pity and remorse brought on by a growing awareness of reality as well as the influence of genital impulses, is a pre-condition for sublimation and restorative tendencies (Klein, 1975c).

The moral character of the super-ego, a growing reality sense and detachment from the original object, are all internal processes that occur in the depressive position and will be regarded here, in mythical terms as relating to Apollo since he personified everything in nature that was considered "intelligible, determinate, measurable, as opposed to the fantastic, vague and shapeless" (Fraenkel, 1935 as cited by Guthrie, 1955, p. 153). As the god of clear perception, he brought to light that which was hidden and was therefore, adverse to the distorted and confusing vision of the world resulting from Dionysian ecstasy or merging states (Otto, 1954). His bow was symbolic of this ability to contemplate objectively from a distance and accordingly, in Homer's Hymn to Apollo in the Iliad, his epithets range from "Far-shot" Apollo, to the god that "works from a distance" (Sallis, 1991, p. 24). In consideration of this, it may be said that this deity was representative of the distance which exists between man and the gods: heaven and earth; mortal and immortal (ibid). From a psychoanalytic perspective, he may therefore signify the distance that the ego requires from the id in order to distinguish real objects from those of the inner world of phantasy. As such, the Apollonian tendency can be described as lacking the sense of omnipotence, denial of separation and manic flight to the internal ideal object that characterize the Dionysian.

I now wish to draw attention to yet another similarity between the maternal aspect of the harsh, pre-Oedipal super-ego and Dionysian worship which was noted by Adrian Stokes (1958). The proximity here lies in Dionysos' birth myth

and the pre-Homeric doctrines of rebirth originating from Eastern Mother cults (Dodds, 1960). After Dionysos' destruction by the Titans that came about as a result of the earth goddess, Gaia's envy, the infant's heart was rescued by Zeus, the protective good object, who sewed it into his own thigh until Dionysos was ready to be reborn. Subsequently, Dionysos is the only Olympian (as he eventually came to be recognized) known to have suffered death and undergone rebirth which links him to the primitive rites and beliefs of chthonic (earth) or fertility cults. Central to the doctrines of these cults was the concept of immortality, which ran counter to the Olympian conviction that only the gods could assume such a divine privilege, whereas man must entertain "mortal thoughts" (Stokes, 1958, p. 37). According to Stokes, these primitive chthonian beliefs in immortality probably stemmed from a manic denial of death equivalent to the inability to accept loss, which is a pre-condition for reparation and the development of more stable ego boundaries in the depressive position.

Although Stokes' comparison of the mitigation of the harshness of the super-ego in Olympian cults and myths is discussed in cultural terms based upon the development of a greater reality sense in fifth century Greece, the focus of this thesis is on a similar modification of this psychic structure which occurs during latency (Stokes, 1958). But prior to exploring some of the internal processes that lead to this adjustment, I wish to return to the dichotomy that exists between Klein's formulations on the super-ego and those of Freud. Apart from the difference in the time of the origin of the super-ego (i.e. pre-genital versus Oedipal), the second point on which they diverge centers on the "constituents" of this structure (Hinshelwood, 1991, p. 100).

- The Constituents of the Super-Ego

In the Kleinian view, the super-ego is comprised of multiple internalized objects or imagos, rather than, as Freud suggested, only the introjected real parents. Klein came to realize by observing children at play that these variegated internal objects are frequently made manifest in dramatic play characters that are either excessively sadistic or conversely, kind and helpful. Play activities that allow for this type of personification greatly assist the child in mastering anxiety stemming from fear of the primitive super-ego as well as the child's own destructive impulses. This explains why fantastic figures that threaten to cut, kill or devour appear in their games and artwork (Klein, 1975b).

Klein continues to say that the child's ability to personify the multiple constituents of the super-ego is particularly crucial for those children who have difficulty controlling impulsive acting-out behaviour such as the child who is the subject of this study. She states that amongst the numerous causes underlying a child's repetition of impulsive acts that lead to punishment, may be that the child is in need of external control from real objects whose punishment is perceived as less extreme and violent than that of its primitive introjects (Klein, 1975c). Fear of excessive punishment that corresponds to the child's own sadistic attacks on the object, results in an inability to tolerate guilt which in turn leads to its repression. Following such strong repression of guilt is the repression of phantasy as well and as a consequence, the impossibility that phantasy may be used for sublimation (ibid). Klein therefore held that even in the most diversified sublimations which include not only play, but also art and work activities, we may find the aggression and sadism which have been associated here with the Dionysian tendency. These primitive impulses and phantasies, if not given as safe outlet are instead

excessively repressed as they were in the child-king Pentheus, will lead to a "vicious circle" of more aggression, excessive guilt and fear of retribution from the primitive super-ego (Klein, 1975a, p. 219). One area of Klein's theory that will, therefore, be expanded upon in the following chapter, is how the therapist, by assuming various symbolic roles such as the persecutory wicked witch or the helpful fairy mother, which relate to the multiple internalized objects, may stimulate a modification in the severity of the super-ego and thus encourage sublimation and ego development (ibid).

The last aspect that needs to be examined concerning the multiplicity of the constituents of the super-ego is that they continue to be influenced by pre-genital instinctual impulses, even in adulthood. This becomes evident when we study the works of the great tragedians whose "as if" characters bear similar ambivalent qualities as those imagos of the primitive super-ego, and whose conflictual themes draw upon the most terrifying infantile material (Klein, 1975a, p. 152).

The artist's ability to depict these early primitive experiences in a symbolic form that is both gratifying and acceptable to his audience is the reason behind our sympathetic identification with his dramatic characters as well as that which bestows beauty and greatness upon his creations (Klein, 1975a). With the exclusion of these primitive constituents, a work of art would be devoid of any aesthetically pleasing qualities and would be reduced to something empty, soulless or merely pretty (Segal, H., 1952). This ability of the artist to give form and to beautify even the most horrific content so that it may be gazed upon without fear, denial or repulsion is associated to the Apollonian artistic impulse since Apollo, often referred to as *Phoebus* (the "Pure" or "Shining one"), was the god of radiance, beauty and light (Sallis, 1991, p. 23).

Apollo has also been regarded by contemporary scholars of history as the most sublime Homeric god since lucidity, measure and order were the essence of his spirit (Otto, 1954). Adrian Stokes (1958) translated these Apollonian traits into psychoanalytic terms and identified them as the source of aesthetic pleasure. This postulation is based upon the premise that the deity's sublimity is analogous to "form" in art that embodies and "condenses symbolic expressiveness even of the most horrible kind" (p. 45). For this reason, formal qualities may be a symbolic means of externalizing and making visible the internal world of the artist and of the child who lacks adequate verbal skills to express itself effectively. In his writings Stokes also goes to great extents to reconcile form and content since according to his psychoanalytic approach to aesthetics, these two elements have been artificially divided by psychoanalysis. He therefore suggests a "subject matter for formal qualities" (1958, p. 46).

The content of form is arrived at by the very gestures, processes and manipulation of art materials that are employed to create formal elements and are in themselves endowed with symbolic meaning (Wollheim, 1974). These factors which are inherent in the creation of art, the art therapeutic process, as well as in aesthetic appreciation, will be examined with regard to Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies in the second and third chapters of this study but prior to this, the discussion of developmental issues and the super-ego as they relate to the myths and legends of these two deities will be completed.

- The Modification of the Super-Ego

The final substantive point upon which Klein's formulations on the super-



ego depart from Freud's classical theory, concerns the "modification" of this psychic structure (Hinshelwood, 1991, p. 101). As mentioned earlier, a mitigation of the severity of the super-ego arises during the course of post-oedipal development. One reason that this change occurs is that as the child matures, the ego attempts to synthesize the multiple constituents of the super-ego thus creating integrated imagos which correspond more closely to Freud's oedipal super-ego that is derived from the real parents. This synthesizing of the internal objects of the super-ego, in turn, assists the child in its efforts to adapt to reality since the terrifying and distorted amalgam of imagos that comprised the pre-genital super-ego, now begins to exert less influence on the ego. Thus, the child is allowed more freedom to respond to and accept the requirements of real objects in its environment (Hinshelwood, 1991).

### 2.7 The Apollonian Tendency and the Adjustment of the Ego and Super-Ego in Latency

The child's increased capacity to adapt to reality resulting from this modification of the super-ego during the oedipal phase will, in turn, lead to an "adjustment" between the ego and the super-ego in latency (Klein, 1975c, p. 180). Whereas in earlier childhood, these two structures remained at odds with one another due to the excessive cruelty and demands of the primitive super-ego in latency, a reconciliation between them occurs and they acquire the common objective of adapting to the external world. The reason Klein viewed this adjustment as taking place in latency and not at earlier periods of childhood, was firstly, because it is only at the onset of latency that the super-ego reaches its complete formation and secondly, that the ego has integrated and strengthened sufficiently to assist in making this adjustment (ibid). Klein describes this process

as follows:

The strengthened ego joins with the super-ego in setting up a common aim which includes above all the subjection of the id and its adaption to the demands of real objects in the external world. At this period of its development the child's ego ideal is the well-behaved 'good' child that satisfies its parents and teachers (1975c, p. 180).

It becomes apparent that it is not merely the modification (synthesis) of the super-ego that causes the transition to compliance and self-restraint in the latency aged child, but also the adjustment between a more unified super-ego and stronger ego that together strive to acquire the ego-ideals of external objects and thereby adapt to reality (ibid). Adrian Stokes (1958) compares the alignment of these two structures to the development of a greater awareness of reality in fifth century Greece as well as the subsequent abatement of severity in the "Hellenic cultural super-ego" (p. 6). Furthermore, Stokes proposes that it was as a consequence of this adjustment, which he views in cultural terms, that Olympian religion evolved. He therefore contrasts the Homeric gods who represented "Justice", or a super-ego with a more moral character, to the earlier chthonic cults that possessed enveloping tendencies similar to those of the pre-genital super-ego. Thus, according to this theorist, the myths and poems of Homer, "Pope" (p. 37) of the Olympians, "epitomize the sublimation of unconscious phantasy" (p. 39).

- Latency: Moderation vs. Excess

Apollo, god of ethics, beauty and form is also associated here with latency and sublimation in accordance with Freud's (1926) view that during this period of development there occurs an "erection of ethical and aesthetic barriers in the ego"

(Freud, as cited by Klein, 1975c, p. 186). Similarly, in Klein's observations of latency aged children in sublimatory activities such as play, art and school work, she noted that they frequently displayed a great pre-occupation with the correctness of detail, rules, etc. She attributed this over-concern with orderliness, compulsive rituals and desire to beautify or perfect in their sublimations, to their need to to gain the approval of external objects and thereby mitigate the severity of internal ones. These sublimations or desexualized activities were also aimed at helping the child to master anxiety stemming from the super-ego by assisting it in the repression of instinctual impulses and masturbatory phantasies (ibid). Hence, Klein considered that the latency aged child's dependence on external objects to support the prohibitions of the super-ego and thereby master anxiety, was stronger at this period of development than at any other. In addition, the child's sublimations were the means by which the external world of reality and the internal world of phantasy could be "bridged" (ibid, p. 182).

Yet Klein also remarked that the compulsive ceremonies of children in this age category as well as their anxious need for approval from elders to reduce their guilt and fear of internal objects showed very little distinction from the obsessional traits of the neurotic. In her opinion, the most salient factor that distinguishes the "boundary" (ibid, p. 185) between the neurotic and the normal child is "excess" (ibid, p. 187). This demarcation is defined as follows: If the latency aged child's achievements and activities are executed only as a means of countering overwhelming guilt or anxiety and are not performed also for the sake of pleasure or interest, then these same mechanisms would manifest in excess and impede healthy development.

One leading cause for a transgression of the boundary that separates health

from pathology, is an increase in the severity of the super-ego as occurs in the latter part of latency also referred to as pre-adolescence. This excessive harshness of the super-ego recurs in pre-puberty due to a resurgence of libido, which in turn, leads to an increased pressure on the ego to contain instinctual impulses that were previously repressed (Klein, 1975c). Such excessive anxiety was suffered by the young boy who is the subject of this thesis since being eleven years of age, he was just entering this period which precedes puberty. It will become more apparent with the presentation of clinical vignettes in the next chapter, that he displayed an exaggerated over-concern with orderliness, cleanliness and other obsessional mechanisms which were indicative of a heightened level of anxiety in latency, as well as fits of rage or deep brooding that may accompany the return of libidinal and aggressive impulses in pre-adolescence (ibid).

## 2.8 Crossings

This crossing of the boundary which defines neurosis from healthy development in latency and pre-puberty may be compared to the transcendence and dissolution of Apollonian limits that preserve order, self-control and moderation (Sallis, 1991). What follows is a crossing-over into Dionysian ecstasy which is characterized by excess. This transgression of boundaries becomes evident in the course of the art therapeutic process with latency aged children in numerous ways such as: exceeding the limits of the therapeutic frame (i.e. time, place, etc.) (Rose, 1980); manic reparation in the art process or conversely, inhibition due to the excessive use of obsessive mechanisms (Klein, 1975c); aggressive attacks on the therapist (Hubback, 1990); art productions that are devoid of phantasy (Klein, 1975c); the excessive merging of the self with the object in transference phenomena otherwise referred to as projective identification

(Grotsein and Malin, 1966), etc.

Although each of the aforementioned phenomena depicts only the more negative aspects of Dionysian dissolution, it must be remembered that Dionysos was a god whose essence was ambivalence and who therefore, embodied contradictory traits that were both horrible and benign (Savitz, 1990).

That which needs to be emphasized concerning this dual nature of Dionysian ecstasy, whether it occurs in the creative process or within the therapeutic setting, is that underlying each of these phenomena is excess. Hence, the classical scholar John Sallis (1991) remarks: "in its character as ecstasy the Dionysian state/impulse is excess itself, excess as such, the very moment of exceeding..." (p. 56).

Consequently, Dionysian excess could be regarded as being in opposition to Apollonian moderation, but despite all evidence stated thus far which may lead to the assumption that these tendencies are diametrically opposed, my understanding of them is that they could not be so isolated. All creativity for example, requires the influence of both tendencies (Silk and Stern, 1981). For instance, as artistic impulses, Nietzsche viewed the Dionysiac as "projected" into Apollonian images, and as co-existing psychological states, he regarded these two tendencies as being shared by both the artist and his audience (Sallis, 1991, p. 143). Nietzsche, therefore, describes this unity in The Birth of Tragedy (1871) as follows: "Whenever the Dionysiac forces become too obstreperous, as is the case today, we are safe in assuming that Apollo is close at hand..." (Nietzsche, translated by Francis Golffing, 1956, p. 145). Comparatively, in another section of the same work, he states:

As far as human awareness is concerned, the two impulses manifest themselves in a strict relation. Only so much Dionysiac experience is permitted to the individual consciousness as can be controlled by the Apolline and translated into its life-sustaining terms. (Nietzsche translated by Silk and Stern, 1981, p. 88).

Even in mythical or legendary accounts Apollo and Dionysos were often viewed as co-existing. For example, in the Orphic Thracian religion, although Dionysos was considered as the main object of worship, many revisions of an Apollonian nature evolved in the rites and beliefs of this cult (Guthrie, 1955). Similar instances of their unity prevailed in classical times, but the most significant account of the alliance between these two deities was the position of reverence given to the ecstatic god, Dionysos, in Apollo's shrine at Delphi (Guthrie, 1955). Even though the more manic features of Dionysian worship were modified or "tamed" at Delphi (Guthrie, 1955, p. 200), nevertheless, there existed some degree of his *ekstasis* mingled with Apollo, as for example, in the Pythia, a priestess of Apollo, who in an inspired state of *enthousiasmos* (with the god in her), prophesized the destinies of men (Rohdes, 1925).

Dionysian orgiastic festivals also took place there during the three winter months of the year when it was believed that the Lord of Delphi, Apollo, was absent from the temple visiting his people in the North (Guthrie, 1955). In fact, at this point in antiquity, these two deities were so intertwined, that the front pediment of the temple at Delphi shows Apollo while the back depicts Dionysos (Rohdes, 1925). Thus, in the words of Plutarch, a priest of Apollo and religious historian, the Delphic shrine was regarded as a place "in which Dionysos has no less share than Apollo" (Plutarch as cited by Guthrie, 1955, p. 202).

## 2.9 The Apollonian/Dionysian Continuum

Before concluding this chapter, it is important to restate that thus far in this study, the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies have been presented antithetically, but this forced opposition was presented for the purpose of exposition only, since behind Apollo, there is always Dionysos (Silk and Stern, 1981). I even prefer to regard these tendencies as a continuum whose poles proceed from the measured and temperate, to the excessive. Hence, if we once again consider the use of obsessive mechanisms in latency as an example, it becomes apparent that *some degree* of these defences is required in sublimations to assist the child in its task of suppressing instinctual impulses and meeting the demands of the super-ego and external objects (Klein, 1975c). Yet, if these same defences are used excessively, they lead to a transgression and dissolution of Apollonian limits and a crossing-over into the Dionysiac. From a structural point of view, this Apollonian/Dionysian continuum has some affinity with what Gilbert Rose (1980) describes as the "transitions or shadings between the primary and secondary processes" (p. 122). This continuum which consists of varying degrees of emotions and internal processes deriving from the ego's tendency to dissolve into and re-emerge from primary narcissism, entails an "unconscious re-living" or "feeling memory" of those early fusion states (ibid. p. 71).

Although this dissolution of ego boundaries and subsequent merging states are comparable to Dionysian *sparagmos* (dismemberment) and *enthousiasmos* (mania), the difference between Rose's model and Klein's relational-structural perspective, lies in the Kleinian view that the ego does not merely relive "memories" of primitive states, but instead, virtually undergoes all the conflicts,

defences and phantasies that characterize these states.

Furthermore, prior to presenting the clinical data which will illuminate the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies as described herein, the reader should also be reminded that the concepts of states, phases or stages are not regarded as so clear-cut in this thesis, since within the Kleinian theoretical framework, such sharp demarcations are rejected. Instead, Klein chose to adopt the term "positions" to describe the fluctuating movements of the ego in relation to its objects throughout the life of the individual (Hinshelwood, 1990, p. 393). The concepts of regression or fixation are therefore, also dropped in order to call attention to the idea of an ego that not only fluidly moves back and forth between positions, but accordingly, has the tendency to split or fragment and re-integrate (Hinshelwood, 1991). Throughout this thesis, it is these fluctuations and tendencies that are referred to as the Apollonian and Dionysian.



## CHAPTER III

### **DIONYSIAN EXCESS AS REFLECTED WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE THERAPEUTIC FRAME: PARALLELS BETWEEN THEMES IN 'THE BACCHAE' AND A CLINICAL CASE STUDY**

The main objective of the previous chapter was to demonstrate how primitive internal processes characterized by excess and linked to the chthonian rites and legends of Dionysos, may have evolved from the influence of the harsh, pre-oedipal super-ego. Themes of exorbitant guilt, fear and punishment underlying these pre-Homeric religious beliefs, were then contrasted with the later Olympian religion from which arose the lyrical poetry and myths that evidenced such ideals as justice, moderation and the beauty of form. Homeric religion was therefore regarded as the result of an adjustment between a post-oedipal super-ego with a moral character and a stronger ego which was capable of distinguishing between the real, external world and that of phantasy. This chapter will focus on the presentation of art therapy clinical data to illumine these themes as they relate to the dynamics of latency and pre-puberty. My chief interest here is to provide therapists with a view of how this model which is based upon a psychoanalytic approach to aesthetics, the dramatic works of ancient playwrights and a Kleinian relational-structural model, may enhance their clinical impressions and impart a deeper understanding of psychological issues arising in pre-genital and genital development.

#### 3.1 The Paradoxical Space

To achieve this synthesis, I will begin by summarizing the ancient Greek tragedy, The Bacchae, which was produced by the dramatic poet, Euripides, at

approximately 407-408 B.C. One reason already mentioned, that prompted me to select this tragedy over other dramatic works originating from that period, was due to the dramatist's ability to draw upon the most primitive conflicts of the infant for his basic themes. As such, this poem alludes to Dionysian excess which is marked by a proliferation of manic processes: oral and anal-sadistic tendencies; as well as the overwhelming pressure of the pre-genital super-ego.

Although the life-histories of the Olympian gods depicted in the epic poetry of Homer also indicate some degree of primitive processes at work (Stokes, 1958), nowhere is the interplay between the imaginary world of phantasy and that of reality more clearly exemplified than in tragedy (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988). This paradoxical space of tragic drama also referred to by the Greek scholar, Charles Segal, as "liminality", is an "in-between space" where the advent of illusion causes the dissolution of perceptible reality. But a question now arising which should be examined prior to elaboration on The Bacchae, is: What may the connection be between Dionysos, god of the vine, and this liminal space of tragic drama? The answer most widely suggested by historical scholars such as Charles Segal in his book, Dionysian Poetics and Euripedes' Bacchae (1988), exists in the gods' main attribute of confusing those very boundaries that define illusion from what is real. In the same manner, tragedy created a space where the audience, while beholding these works of antiquity, would be inclined to transgress the bounds of everyday existence and enter a world of fiction. Hence, what they actually saw manifesting before their eyes took on the "appearance" or "illusion" of reality (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988, p. 187). All categorical divisions overlapped in this space as, for example, those distinguishing male from female; animal from human; savage from civilized; mortal from immortal (Segal, C., 1982). This blurring of objects, which does not differ significantly from the

infant's confused and distorted vision of the external world, was due to Dionysos' power to bridge the distance between illusion and reality (Segal, C., 1982). Dionysian fusion, inspired by the liberating effects of wine or ecstatic dance and music, was therefore considered both the opposite and the compliment of Apollo's insistence upon limit and the boundaries which divide categories (ibid).

### 3.2 The Reversals and Doublings of the Tragic Mask

Although Dionysos was regarded as a master of illusion, as well as the deity who disrupts and diffuses familiar appearances, he nevertheless demanded to be "seen" and recognized as a god by men (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988, p. 391). The only way that he could be made *phaneros* (manifest), was by hiding himself from all of those who believed, like the child-king Pentheus, only in what they could see before them (ibid). His true identity was therefore revealed by concealing himself behind disguises and for this reason, he came to be known as "the god of the mask" or "the stranger" whose varient identities also became linked with the donning of theatrical masks on the stage (ibid, p. 201). In The Bacchae, which centers on themes of reversed and concealed identities, Dionysos appears in the leading role as the "Stranger" who is hidden behind a mask worn by an actor. The god's true identity is then disclosed through a series of guises and forms he assumes, while simultaneously, the actor who embodies Dionysos since he wears his mask, can also be regarded as the god of metamorphosis himself, manifesting in human form. According to Vernant and Vidal-Naquet (1988), in their discussion of the role of the mask in ancient Greek tragedy, these reversals and doublings in Euripides' play are striking representations of Dionysian *mania*.

- The Mask and Identification

Several factors prompted me to investigate the tragic mask in ancient Greek tragedy as it relates to art therapy with latency and pre-puberty aged children. One of the leading considerations for this inquest was the affinity I perceived between the issues of identity underlying disguises and metamorphosis in Euripides' play, and the emergence of similar conflicts in post-oedipal development. I was particularly struck by the similarity of the dramatic characters' assumptions of various roles on the stage and of the child's explorations of figures from phantasy, films or books in their dramatic role playing and their art productions (Klein, 1975c). Another factor which contributed to this inquiry into the relationship between art therapy and the tragic mask were the ideas of seeing, perception and insight which prevail in the play. Euripides' contrast of clear vision with illusion and distortion of reality which lies at the root of the crisis in The Bacchae, also plays a major part in the art therapist's work with visual images that reflect what may otherwise remain unseen. For example, the manifest content and formal qualities of images produced during the art therapeutic session may bring forth the latent content that lies hidden beneath surface appearances. Correspondingly, gazing upon the eyes of Dionysos' mask on the proscenium made visible to the audience that which was simultaneously lacking and yet present, as for example, the absence of the real god behind the appearance of his mask (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988).

- Masks that Reveal and Conceal

Dionysos was a god whose countenance required to be looked upon in close proximity and he was also the only Olympian to be conveyed in vase paintings

facing frontally rather than in profile (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet). His eyes often stared out at the viewer demanding to be seen, and for this reason, throughout the text of The Bacchae, the reader may encounter a myriad of terms relating to visibility and perception such as: *eidos* (to see and to know); *morphe* (form, shape, figure); *phaneros* (manifest, tangible); *phaino* (to bring to light; to make happen); *emphanes* (apparent); *horao* (to have right), etc. (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988, p. 393).

This aspect of seeing the invisible behind appearances in The Bacchae, has also been interpreted by some critics as a warning against strong repression since primitive constituents of the psyche and instinctual impulses, will frequently surface in consciousness in "disguised" or "masked" form (Roberts, 1975).

Latent primitive content may also manifest clothed in the ego's defense mechanisms such as projective identifications, denial, reaction-formation, etc. Although these guises are usually effective in concealing their primitive origins, nevertheless, it became apparent to Freud and his successors that no matter how successful the repression, if it is excessively strong, symptoms would inevitably surface that would ultimately betray what lay beneath these masks (Parson, 1990). For example, in The Bacchae, the young King, Pentheus, assumes various disguises which could be interpreted as mechanisms of defense that shielded him from an overly anxious attachment to his mother, Agave, as well as his incestuous desires and sadistic phantasies arising from the influence of instinctual impulses (Roberts, 1975). These ineffective attempts to conceal his inner strivings from himself as well as from others behind over-rationalization, omnipotent control, denial and other defenses, resulted in a resurgence of the repressed which penetrated these disguises (Roberts, 1975). When his excessive control and reason

gave way to impulsive, violent outbursts, these outer veils that also served as shields for his ego, were destroyed, eventually leading to his destruction.

It becomes evident that the arrival of Dionysos to Thebes, the city that Pentheus was to reign, was not simply for the purpose of making himself known as a god and son of Zeus, but also to expose the split-off and repressed parts of the young King's inner world (Segal, C., 1982). By bringing to light his innermost desires and thoughts, the god also disclosed another repressed aspect of Pentheus that lay concealed within the etymology of his name. Pentheus derives from the Greek word *penthos* which is translated as "mourning", "grief" or "suffering" (ibid., p. 251). In psychoanalytic terms it could therefore be said that Dionysos acted as a "mirror" which reflected the shrouded and invisible inner world of the King, forcing him to abruptly confront and break through those defenses that had protected him from recognizing his repressed guilt and depressive anxiety (Segal, C., 1982, p. 240). Thus, with the lifting of repression, Pentheus had to endure "the grief (penthos) contained in his name" (ibid.).

- Symbols as Reflective Masks

The King's strong repression of guilt and anxiety also led to his destruction since he failed to release these submerged affects by more moderate means such as in sublimations (Roberts, 1975). One example of this discharge and neutralization exists in the artist's special ability to symbolically use art materials to transform latent content into communication (Segal, H., 1991). Symbols used in sublimations are also required for working through mourning in the depressive position and are therefore helpful in mitigating excessive guilt which would otherwise inhibit phantasy and the ability to restore the object in sublimation. It

follows that by encouraging mourning and the acceptance of loss, symbols will lead to separation from the object since projective indentifications are minimized and a greater awareness of reality sets in (ibid).

Consequently, it could be said that symbols are reflective surfaces similar to the masks of Dionysos which serve to veil or reveal latent content in dream-work, symptoms as well as the manifest content and form of images. Yet unlike the Dionysian mirror which forces one to look directly at horrific and painful content, symbols transform and distance the unacceptable. For this reason, symbol formation will be associated here with "far-shooting" Apollo and Homer's Olympian gods who personified all of nature giving it form and beauty. Of these sublime Apollonian images, which like the manifest content of dreams contain symbols, Nietzsche stated, "there are no beautiful surfaces without a terrible depth" (Nietzsche as cited by Sallis, 1991, p. 36). Furthermore, these "transfiguring" or "esthetic mirrors", as he referred to them, were like "veils (verhülle)" that concealed from view what was most horrible and terrifying to behold (Nietzsche, 1870-71, translated by Giolfing, 1956, p. 32). Similarly, Adrian Stokes holds that latent affects such as guilt and depressive anxiety are inherent in the classical forms and life histories of Homer's heroes, gods and goddesses, to a far greater degree than in the Dionysian tradition with its manic denial of reality (1958).

### 3.3. Latency: The Lifting of Repression and the Emergence of Apollo

Klein observed that the repression of guilt and depressive anxiety was most prevalent during latency and much of the therapeutic work with this age group is therefore, chiefly aimed at lifting strong repressions in order for these emotions to

surface (Klein, 1975c). These affects, which are determining factors in all sublimation, if not exposed, will interfere with the restoration of the object in creative work, as well as impede the development of a therapeutic alliance or what Klein referred to as the "analytic situation" (ibid. p. 60). Accordingly, she concluded that one of the most pertinent considerations in encouraging the establishment of this therapeutic situation, is to come into contact with the child's repressed thoughts and feelings. By lifting strong repressions, their phantasy is liberated enriching symbolization, elaboration and imaginative work. In addition, as the latency aged child's tendency towards strong suppression of these affects mitigates, they also become more receptive to interpretations which were previously resisted, thus developing the insight required for the advancement of the therapeutic alliance (ibid.).

The question that now arises is how to release these constrained contents of the psyche that underlie all creative work into the bounds of the therapeutic frame without dissolving it since a sudden resurgence of latent material will not only disrupt the structured therapeutic frame but also those boundaries within which the self is contained (Savitz, 1990). This paradoxical situation is metaphorically described by Charles Segal as "how to bring into the bounded realm of form this principle that dissolves boundaries, how to make Dionysos live within the civic and aesthetic confines of the city, theater and festival without annihilating that space" (p. 16).

Once again, from a psycho-analytic viewpoint, one way of liberating repressed content without eliciting a fragmentation of the ego similar to the *sparagmos* (dismemberment) that Pentheus underwent, is through desexualized activities such as work, play and art. These sublimations result in a release from



the debilitating effects of primitive states and emotions since repressed contents of the psyche are projected into words and images (Klein, 1975c).

The purging of guilt and anxiety is also comparable to Apollonian purification rites whereby one was freed from the "pollution" arising from homicide (Stokes, 1958, p. 38). Pollution centered on the primitive belief that when human life was taken by violence, the ghost of the deceased would seek vengeance on the murderer and his family (Guthrie, 1954). This "blood guilt" if not purified by the god Apollo, who himself had to undergo purification for the slaying of the Delphian dragon, the Python, would so persecute and terrify the guilty person that physical illness or madness might ensue (ibid, p. 70). Pollution was therefore based upon the primitive conviction that one could expect to be punished with as much violence as one used in attacking, a conception which is strongly reminiscent of the infant's paranoid anxiety stemming from failure to restore the destroyed object in phantasy.

Although at first glance Apollonian purification which freed the guilty from the influence of dangerous persecutory objects may appear merely as superstition, nevertheless, it did show some degree of moral judgment since the guilty party first had to assume responsibility and thus atone for the crime (Otto, 1954).

Since to purify was to heal, Apollo also came to bear the epithet *Agyieus* or god of healing. This therapeutic aspect of the god was not only integral to his purification rites, but was also a part of Apollonian images which embodied the harmony and balance that for the ancient Greeks, signified good health (Stokes, 1958). Nietzsche describes the healing properties of Apollonian art as follows:

"Here, when the danger to his will is greatest, art approaches as a saving sorceress expert at healing. She alone knows how to turn these disgusting thoughts about the horror and absurdity of existence into representations with which one can live: these are the sublime as artistic taming of the horrible and the comic as the artistic discharge of the disgust of the absurd." (As cited by Sallis, 1990, p. 109).

Hence, the healing effect of art lies firstly in its potential to tame that which is most unsightly and threatening without excessive denial and secondly, in that it bridges phantasy and reality allowing for repressions to be lifted while boundaries remain intact. By uniting the inner and outer worlds, Dionysos is "projected" into Apollonian form whether that be words, images, music or even gesture, and thus the artist is also restored (Sallis, 1991, p. 143).

In the above citation, Nietzsche is drawing particular attention to the healing benefits of Apollonian imagery as manifest in Attic tragedy. Yet another aspect of tragic drama that was considered therapeutic from as far back as Aristotle to present day thinkers is catharsis. This cathartic effect of tragedy stems from its potential to bring to the fore emotions, conflicts or thoughts that were previously suppressed, in the same manner that under the influence of Dionysos *Eleutherios* (Liberator) or Dionysos *Lusios* (Loosener), "the unutterable could be spoken and the unthinkable could be staged" (Simon, 1978, p. 144).

But was this cathartic effect of tragic drama truly conducive to the mental health of the individual or to his moral enlightenment? In other words, does this release of excessive emotion truly have any therapeutic value? The answer to this question is debatable since the idea of "letting it all hang out" still exists and is popular in our culture, but I would have to agree with Freud and his successors that this intense purging of affect cannot be regarded as effective therapeutic treatment

because it conflicts with the self-knowledge and insight which produces positive changes in the ego (Simon, 1978, p. 145). Furthermore, neither are the development of the super-ego nor restorative capabilities enhanced since the ethical thought and feeling that underlie a more mature conscience are also lacking. Consequently, the historian Erwin Rohde (1925) stated that such cathartic practices in their "origin and essence had nothing whatever to do with morality with what we should call the voice of conscience...Cathartic practices required and implied no feeling of offense, of personal guilt, of personal responsibility" (p. 295).

Despite this evidence, there remains one aspect of tragic drama which is conducive to mental health and is also inherent to therapeutic work with clients. This process which occurs when the spectator makes an "empathic identification" with the plight of the characters on stage is similar to an identification with the feelings or suffering of the other in the transference situation that in turn leads to insight and a need to repair the good object (Simon, 1978, p. 143). When some degree of guilt and anxiety are thus experienced, a restoration of the self also follows. But prior to introducing vignettes to illustrate how such identifications can be encouraged within the therapeutic alliance, I will present a summary of some of the events that led to Pentheus' death in The Bacchae and in addition, to explore some of the themes underlying this dramatic poem which will be used to illumine the art therapy clinical data.

### 3.4 The Bacchae (Euripides, 406 B.C.)

The legend begins with Dionysos entering in mortal guise and announcing that he has come to Thebes, home of his deceased, mortal mother, princess

Semele, to establish the first Bacchic rites of worship in Greece. From descriptions of his travels and his cult, the inhabitants of the city soon begin to suspect that the "Stranger" and his ecstatic religion are barbarian (Parson, 1990, p. 21). The Greek word *barbaros* derives from the nonsense syllables "bar-bar-bar", which for ancient Greeks were representative of the unintelligible and inarticulate sounds uttered by foreigners who were unable to communicate in their native Greek (Webster Encyclopedia Dictionary of English Language, 1965). The etymology of the word, which could be suggestive of the pre-verbal babbling of infants, reinforces the idea that Dionysos personifies the most primitive states of early infancy where the ability to symbolize and communicate has yet to be acquired.

Misunderstood and perceived as uncivilized and alien, Dionysos is rejected by the citizens of Thebes. This alien quality of the god is also reminiscent of an unassimilated object which behaves like a "foreign body" inside the self (Hinshelwood, 1991, p. 222). Alien objects, unlike those that have been synthesized in the super-ego and identified with, cannot enhance the ego by providing it with skills, defenses and characteristics, but instead act like threatening persecutors. It is only through the assimilation of these objects in the super-ego during the depressive position, that they become accessible for identification to support and strengthen the ego (ibid.).

- The Maenads

Due to their resistance to his mysteries, Dionysos punishes the women of Thebes, including Pentheus' mother, Agave, by forcing them to become maenads and driving them to flee to the countryside in a state of Bacchic madness. There,

they join with the chorus. Dionysos' entourage of Asiatic women, who were also regarded as his nurses or surrogate mothers when he was an infant. As mentioned earlier, the distinction between these maenads that followed the god willingly, and the "pathological" group who were compelled to submit into maenadism, is comparable to the splitting of the object into ideal, nurturing or persecutory parts (Parsons, 1990, p. 22). This "black" or "white maenadism", as it has been referred to by Professor E.R. Dodds (1960, p. 159), is one of the underlying themes that will be elaborated upon in the presentation of the art therapy clinical material.

- The Hunter and the Hunted

In the following scene, Pentheus arrives and is informed by his grandfather Cadmus and the prophet, Teiresias, that he must recognize and accept Dionysos as a god without seeking validation for his divine origins or status. Upon receiving this news, the young King, in rage and indignation, gives orders that the "Stranger" and his votaries be imprisoned (Schlesinger, 1963). This theme of suppression or containment of the god could metaphorically represent Pentheus' anxious need to repress the primitive processes and constituents of the psyche that Dionysos personifies (Roberts, 1975). Yet, like the latency aged child, whose sublimations, communication and phantasy are enriched when repressions are lifted, had Pentheus accepted these primitive forces, his own potentials might have been enhanced. Instead, the King's insistence on persecuting Dionysos against the advice of his council results in the most destructive vengeance from the god, who creates a reversal of roles, making Pentheus the hunted prey, while Dionysos and the maenads become predators (Segal, C., 1982).

Charles Segal has devoted an entire chapter to the subject of the hunter and

the hunted in his book. Dionysian Poetics and Euripides Bacchae (1982), since the ancient playwright interwove the theme throughout the tale. For example, amongst the numerous incidents of persecution and revenge that permeate this tragedy, is the pursuit of the maenads by Pentheus and his subsequent flight from them. Yet, as shown in the previous chapter, many other instances of persecution exist in the legendary history of Dionysos, who as an infant, after being attacked, then becomes a vehement avenger.

These metaphorical representations of fight and flight can also be viewed in terms of the earliest inner conflicts of the infant during the paranoid-schizoid position, where due to its own aggressive attacks on the mother in phantasy, it then experiences her as a persecutory and vindictive object (Roberts, 1975). Furthermore, Pentheus' greedy and envious attacks on Agave and the maenads also emphasizes a fear of separation from the overly-anxious and isolated attachment between the mother and son that resulted due to the absence of a third object, the father (Parson, 1990). Hence, like the young boy who is the subject of this thesis, a male figure of authority was not available for Pentheus to identify with. Consequently, through the mechanisms projection and introjection, an identification with the split-off aggressive parts of the primary object ensued, which led to Pentheus being victimized as violently as he had attacked (Roberts, 1975).

- The Dressing Scene: Femininity Phase

These events take place in the following scene where Dionysos and the Bacchantes are captured by the King's men. Although the maenads are magically released to return to their revels in the wild mountains of Cithaeron, Dionysos is

detained in Pentheus' prison. The King is insistent upon interrogating the disguised stranger to discover his true identity and to force him to admit to the sexual misconduct that Pentheus imagines they perform as part of their cult's secret rituals. At this point, Dionysos offers Pentheus the opportunity to actually spy on the maenads and thus satiate his sexual curiosity, on the condition that the King agrees to be disguised as a woman himself. The following is a description of the dressing scene as cited by Roberts (1975, p. 46):

- Dionysos: ...Would you like to see those women, sitting together on the mountain?
- Pentheus: Yes indeed; I would give a large sum of gold to see them.  
(and once the King has accepted the offer...)
- Dionysos: ...Yes you shall find the right hiding place...coming like a crafty spy to watch the Maenads!
- Pentheus: Yes, I can picture them - like birds in the thickets, wrapped in the sweet snare of love.
- Dionysos: That is the very thing you are going to look for...

Many psychoanalytic commentators have interpreted these verses as indicative of Pentheus' repressed sexuality and desire to see the sexual activity of the parents (Roberts, 1975; Parsons, 1990; Simon, 1978; Segal, C., 1982; Savitz, 1990). From a Kleinian perspective, a child's desire "*to know*" about the sexual activities of its parents, which is referred to by Klein as the "epistemophilic impulse", comes about with the onset of Oedipal tendencies in the first year of life (Klein, 1975b, p. 188). The inhibition of this impulse in early childhood may cause a fearful hatred of those who speak foreign languages (similar to the citizens of Thebes who viewed Dionysos as barbarian) as well as speech disturbances. The reason behind this relationship between verbal communication and sexual curiosity is that the child's questions surrounding sexual processes arise at a time when the

speech capacity has not yet developed. Hence, the impulse to see, question and to know about sexual processes is associated with the development of communication, since, if the child lacks these skills, he is left with only his own phantastic images of the combined parents cutting, biting and devouring one another (ibid.). Furthermore, "*not knowing*" increases castration anxiety, particularly in boys who feel more impotent against their rival, the father, when deprived of this knowledge (ibid).

These verses which also depict Pentheus' sexualization of this relationship to his mother can, therefore, be interpreted as an attempt to re-unite with her in order to minimize his sense of inferiority and dependence to her in the Oedipal situation (Roberts, 1975). This infantile wish to penetrate the mother's body and thereby deny separation, as well as his sense of impotence arising from the resurgence of genital impulses, led to a merging or identification with the maternal Bacchic women. Excessive splitting off and repression of this genital desire to re-unite with the primary object consequently hindered his transition to the more defined sexual attitude of puberty, from a primitive pre-genital state where the boundaries demarcating sexual identity are fluid (Segal, C., 1982).

According to Klein, this type of identification with the mother is common to both boys and girls in childhood. Yet the child's ability to establish a more stable genital position in the Oedipal situation is dependent upon the surpassing of this pre-genital tendency, which she refers to as the "femininity phase" (1975c, p. 240). A more detailed description of this phase will be given shortly in conjunction with clinical data but at present, it is sufficient to mention that the femininity phase for boys, is characterized by dread of the father as castrator, as well as fear of punishment from the mother who has been up to this time, the



object of the child's destructive impulses. Excessive fear of mutilation and dismemberment by the mother, in Klein's view, is equivalent to fear of castration which leads to a stronger repression of genital desire for the mother, increasing sadism and a sense of rivalry towards her, thus rendering her "castrator" (1975c, p. 245).

It is my belief that a similar type of feminine identification arose in Pentheus during the dressing scene and as a result, Agave was transformed into a mutilating and castrating mother, or in other words, a mother with a penis. This theme of sexual role reversal, which also became manifest in some sessions with my patient, is portrayed in Euripides' play not only in the scene of Pentheus disguised in feminine attire, but also by the maenads display of male attributes such as hunting skills and uncanny physical strength (Simon, 1978). Furthermore, their castrating masculine character is most strikingly depicted by their taking up of arms, such as the *thyrsus*, a type of ritual wand they carried, which could be symbolic of a "disembodied phallus" (ibid., p. 252).

Once beguiled and robed as a Bacchant, Pentheus falls completely under Dionysos' spell and is unknowingly led to meet his terrible fate at his mother's hands. In addition, it becomes evident, in this final scene, that Pentheus is not only identifying with the Bacchic women, whose ecstasies he secretly wishes to view and participate in, but moreover, shares an identity with Dionysos as a victim of sacrifice (Parsons, 1990).

- The Double and Splitting

The god, who as an infant was rended apart and devoured by the Titans, can

at the same time personify the youth's split off, and repressed feminine attitude since Dionysos displayed effeminate beauty such as "long scented silky hair" and "pale skin" that Pentheus was both fascinated and repulsed by (Parsons, 1990, p. 25). The confusion the King underwent due to his inability to bring together these opposing tendencies in his personality is metaphorically portrayed in this scene where, while being escorted out of the palace in an enchanted state, he begins to experience double vision. This perceptual distortion, evident in Pentheus' comment, "I seem indeed to see twin suns, two cities of Thebes", has been interpreted as an indication of the fragmentation of his world due to the emergence of the split in his psyche (Euripides as cited by Parsons, 1990, p. 30). Hence, Dionysos, by becoming his double, also mirrored to Pentheus some split-off, unacceptable aspects of himself that had until this point, helped him to maintain the illusion of an integrated reality (Parsons, 1990). By making him confront this defense too abruptly, Dionysos initiated a complete breakdown of this mechanism and subsequently, of the King's world (ibid.).

- Sparagmos: Dissolution of the Mask

In the final scene, Pentheus, still disguised as a woman, is led to the mount Cithaeron and prompted to climb a tree where he could hide and clearly spy on the sexual orgies of his mother and the maenads. Agave, while still possessed by Dionysos, spots her son in the tree but mistakes him for a wild mountain lion. In a state of Dionysian excess, she leads the frenzied Bacchantes in pursuit of Pentheus who is shaken out of the tree and dismembered from limb to limb. Agave's delusion persists until she reaches Thebes, victoriously cradling her son's severed head, a mask, which she still believes to be the lion's head. There she is met by her father, Cadmus, who upon reflecting to her that it is her son's head she bears in her

arms, the reality of her hideous act sets in and she finally grieves for Pentheus.

Even in this last scene, Euripides highlights the mask which represents, on the one hand, aspects of the personality that are seen and accepted, while on the other, those that lie beneath it concealed and unknown. The ambivalence arising from this dichotomy is personified by Pentheus, who unable to accept the Dionysian forces within himself, instead develops a fragile personality based on illusory masks. Over-rationalization, idealization and omnipotent control are some of the masks he uses to deny his rage and destructiveness which are split off and projected onto others since he experiences these rejected aspects of his inner world, as stronger than his ability to love and make reparation (Parsons, 1990). Fear of his own aggressive feelings eventually comes to dominate and destroys him for the very reason that they were denied; that is, he was unable to assume responsibility for the destruction of the object in his phantasy and subsequently, to feel the guilt that is necessary for its restoration. Denial, therefore, leaves his world in an irreversibly fragmented state (Parsons, 1990).

As mentioned earlier, in Klein's view, this type of repression of instinctual impulses, guilt and depressive anxiety is typical of children in latency and much of the therapeutic work with this age group is, consequently, aimed at lifting strong repressions which would otherwise lead to inhibition of phantasy and symbolization in sublimation activities. Such strong repressions become evident in the child's rigid, compulsive and repetitive play due to obsessional mechanisms that are required to suppress its destructive trends (Segal, H., 1991). Klein referred to these processes as "obsessional repair" that result when the child experiences excessive fear of being unable to repair what was damaged in his phantasy (Klein, 1975c, p. 169). When such fear is compounded by pressure from the severe, pre-

oedipal super-ego, there usually follows a resurgence of destructive tendencies that becomes manifest in a compulsion to repeat aggressive acts rather than reparative ones (ibid).

### 3.5 Overview of Clinical and Biographical Material

It is my belief that a similar core conflict underlies the aggressive, acting-out behaviour of the eleven year old boy with whom I met for art therapy once a week for eight months, while I held a position as an intern. According to his chart, this boy, who will be referred to as "Steven", was admitted to the day treatment centre and was given a diagnosis of Conduct Disorder: Socialized Type (312.20), due to his escalating aggression towards peers and adults. In school, this oppositional conduct also led to a decline in his academic performance and to social isolation, yet conversely, at home while in the presence of his mother, he appeared, "too quiet and non-communicative, sitting very still and showing little emotion". These reports of Steven's compliant behaviour given by his mother, a single parent who worked during the day to support herself and her son, perplexed the hospital's multi-disciplinary team who viewed Steven's extreme restlessness and aggressivity as unresponsive to their interventions. I was assigned to informally assess the patient in order to determine his ego development (i.e. capacity to adopt to set limits; motivation; mood-affect, etc.) and to assist him in exploring repressed feelings.

- Therapeutic Goals

What I observed during our initial sessions was his eagerness and enthusiasm to participate in the art activities. He stated that he had done "alot of

art" before and was "good at it" and then proceeded to display great mastery and skill in handling the art materials. This flexibility allowed him to adapt easily to the difficult tasks he set forth for himself and due to his initiation of new approaches and ideas, he rarely encountered any resistance to completing a task. The only skill in which he displayed a lack of mastery and inhibition was verbal expression. I was particularly struck by his inability to communicate his feelings, discuss his actual life experiences or even to accept any interpretation that I made in these areas. This guarded attitude that at the time I attributed to difficulty in trusting adults, consequently also hindered the development of a therapeutic alliance. My primary objective was therefore, to find some means of establishing "non-verbal sensory communication" through the manipulation of art materials, exploration of art processes and play activities (Cavallo and Robbins, 1980, p. 114). Interpretations also had to be limited until the alliance was more firmly established since children in latency due to their strong repression will frequently resist exploring thoughts or affects that may be linked with underlying, forbidden instinctual impulses and phantasies (Klein, 1975c).

What I intend to show through this presentation of clinical data is how, after a period of time, the patient's anxiety mitigated with the formation of trust and communication. This was achieved by putting words to the symbolic content of his representations and actions in relation to his repressed conflicts (Sefitel, 1987). Thus, his associations, which at first amounted to no more than a few sentences per session, eventually evolved into full elaborations. These detailed and rich associations furthermore disclosed some of the primitive conflicts lying at the root of his verbal inhibitions such as, fear of separation, abandonment and subsequently, of annihilation stemming from early infancy where words were not available to describe the anxiety (Cavallo and Robbins, 1980). Due to his limited

ability to verbalize and thereby externalize his excessive anxiety, he was frequently prone to destructive behaviour, brooding or psycho-somatic symptoms such as stomach aches, severe asthma attacks as well as an obsessive pre-occupation of becoming ill by coming into contact with bacteria.

- The Therapeutic Frame

At first, any attempt on my part to put words to the latent anxiety that existed masked and invisible behind these defensive screens, would inevitably be met with a strong resistance. Consequently, another objective of these initial sessions was to create a supportive and safe environment which would encourage him to explore what lay unrevealed beneath these veils and to work through pre-oedipal conflicts (Cavallo and Robbins, 1980). The advancement of this safe space often depended upon allowing Steven a total sense of control in the art process whereby the therapist assumes a non-directive role that at times even involves taking orders and being supervised by the client (Klein, 1975c). For example, by not interfering with his destruction of art products and by not exerting any influence on his exploration of art materials or various themes, while at the same time providing some limits to contain him when his acting out behaviour escalated, a positive transference situation emerged since the therapist was experienced as a non-threatening and protective parent-imago, rather than an excessively punitive or demanding internalized object (ibid).

But this type of non-directive approach was not feasible at our first meeting since I was asked to assess the client so that the team could decide upon an appropriate therapeutic intervention. I had some reservation about introducing specifically defined tasks that are usually required in structured diagnostic

assessments at such an early stage of the therapy, when the alliance had not yet formed (Aach-Feldman and Kunkle-Miller, 1987). My concern was that by introducing such structured procedures prior to establishing a trusting relationship or even communication with Steven, he might experience these measures as intrusive and demanding. But time restrictions did not allow for the execution of a non-directive assessment that would extend over a number of sessions so instead, a combined approach with a less structured format was employed (ibid.).

### 3.6 Exposition of Sessions: Images and Verbatim

- The Hunter and Hunted

The purpose of this task was to determine Steven's capacity to adapt within set limits; his ability to express mood or affect symbolically through the manipulation of art materials; as well as to reveal the level of his motivation. Accordingly, some type of set limits were required to observe his response within a given structure. I therefore provided a wide array of traditional art materials (paint, crayons, markers, etc.) which he could freely choose from and allowed him as much time as he needed to complete the task, however, a specification was defined for the subject matter and media. I asked Steven to select amongst an assortment of images that were taken randomly from magazines and separated into two groups - one of people and animals, the other of inanimate objects - and then to make a collage by creating environments for the images of his choice with the art materials.

My first impression, as he began to work, was that the arbitrary manner by which he approached the activity could be indicative of a lack of motivation and he

was executing the drawing simply because he had been directed to do so. His limited investment in the process became even more evident when, after only ten minutes into the activity, he stated, "There, finished." (*Figure 1*)

Although this conformative attitude may have been considered an appropriate and adaptive response to the newness of the therapeutic situation, as well as his conditioning to comply with directions and the regulations of this behaviorally-oriented institution, the primitive quality of the themes that emerged led me to question his passive demeanor. When asked to elaborate, Steven provided the following story:

"These guys were boxers and they are in a gym. One flew there (the airplane) and the other drove. There's a road outside and a fast car zooms by. There is a giraffe on the street and he's wearing boxing gloves."

When I focused on this fragile figure with the boxing gloves, Steven remarked, "Now it could beat anybody up." I attempted to engage him in elaborating further to determine what factors could have prompted this situation where he may either be defensively identifying with the vulnerable animal, or conversely, identifying with the aggressors, the powerful boxers. My efforts to initiate discourse failed but the underlying primitive themes of impotence, persecution and vengeance, similar to those of the hunter and the hunted in The Bacchae were to re-emerge repeatedly in the sessions that followed.

Steven's detachment and rapid execution of the drawing could also be viewed as "a veil of passive compliance", a defense which allows behaviorally



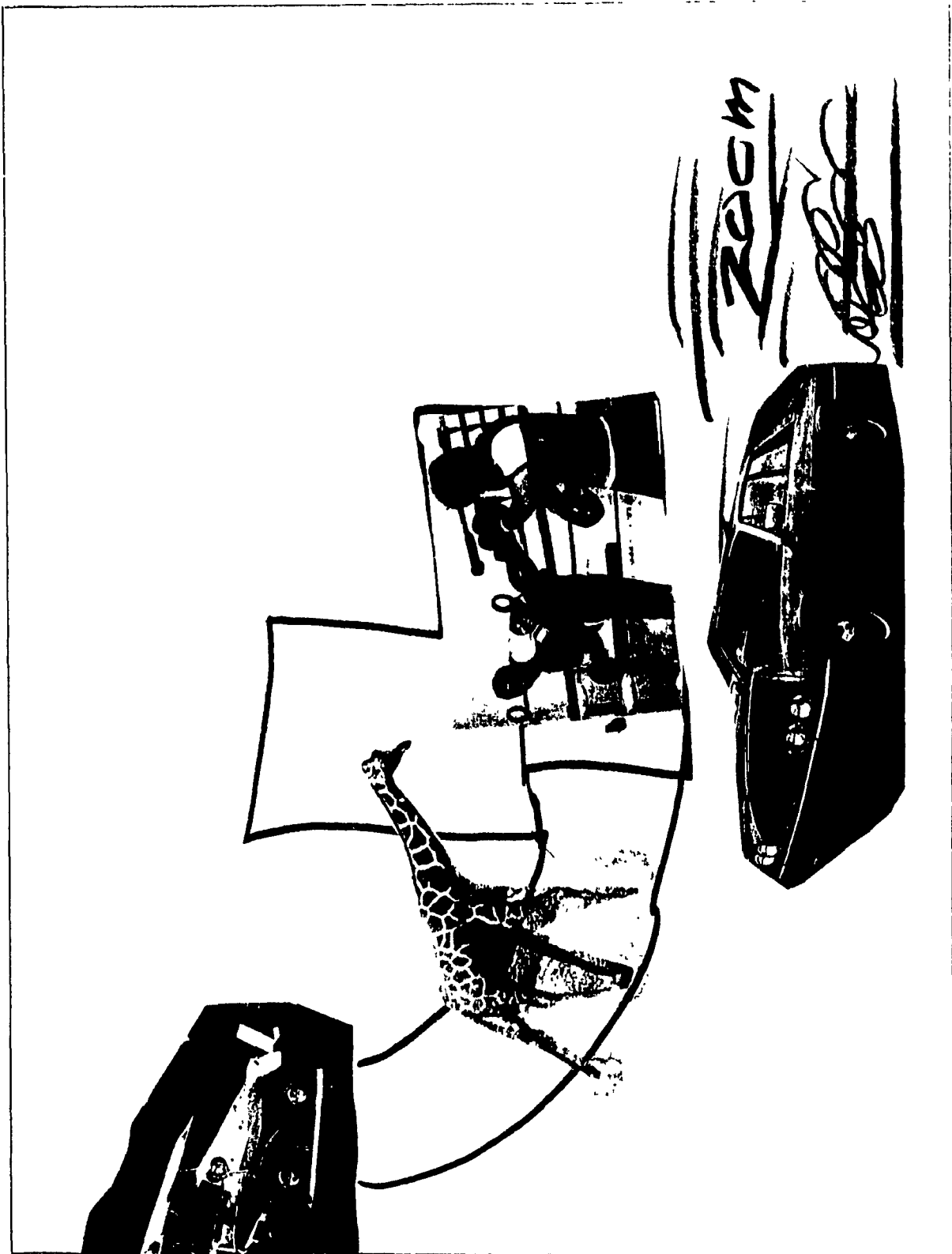


FIGURE 1

aggressive children to meet the demands of their environment while simultaneously concealing underlying destructive impulses (Neibauer, 1988, p. 7). This repressed destructive force if released, usually results in a loss of control and in this image, may be symbolically represented by the various vehicles that "zoom by" and "drive" the figures. The roads on which they are depicted serve as a safe means of directing and channeling instinctual impulses comparable to those provided by sublimation activities. Yet the sketchy manner by which these routes were rendered, as well as their lack of definitive direction, could also be indicative of Steven's inability to rely on these channels of release due to the intensity of his repressed drives.

The giraffe's precarious position, directly in the path of the vehicle in the upper left hand quadrant, may signify his inability to escape the impending threat to his ego arising from the strong repressions of primitive destructive forces. This observation led me to question whether Steven's defensive stance may not be attributed solely to external factors in his environment but also to fear of retaliation from harsh internalized objects of the pre-oedipal super-ego personified by the fighters. By assuming a more directive role at such an early stage in the formation of the therapeutic alliance, prior to the establishment of trust or communication, perhaps I was also identified with one of these demanding and threatening imagos which in turn led to his passive compliance (Klein, 1975c).

Although this fragile surface, earlier compared with the Dionysian mask, allowed him to conceal and distance unacceptable aspects of his personality, it also limited his experimentation with art materials as well as his ability to communicate and connect his feelings to the art experience (Neibauer, 1988). His need to be heard and feel understood by establishing some connection with the therapist

during this initial encounter, may have been symbolically expressed when I withdrew from directing the activity and Steven proceeded to create a three dimensional "telephone" with paper cups, pipe cleaners and tape (*Figure 2*). Perceiving this as an invitation to engage him in some sort of dialogue, I picked up one of the cups and spoke into it while he listened on the other end (Selfel, 1987):

- "T: Hi, Steven, what's new?"  
S: Hi, oh, nothing.  
T: So, what are you doing?  
S: Nothing.  
T: You're doing nothing?  
S: Yeah.  
T: Well, I just called to ask how you are doing.  
S: Okay, bye.  
T: Bye."

His reluctance to pursue the telephone game may have been an indication that although there was a desire to make contact, his anxiety due to the newness of the relationship was too excessive to allow him to participate in the role play. At this point, it occurred to me that the building of trust would be slow with Steven and the most effective therapeutic course of action for future sessions could be one which required minimal direct influence in order to encourage him in gaining a sense of control and confidence in the art process. Yet, while maintaining this unstructured approach, a therapeutic frame would also have to be established wherein he could feel safe enough to explore repressed material that threatened to break through and dissolve his defensive disguises.



FIGURE 2

The challenge of this course of action lay in creating a space comprised of the right combination of containment and clear boundaries associated to the Apollonian tendency and conversely, a looser, more fluid frame, inspired by the Liberator, Dionysos, that would allow latent primitive contents of the psyche to manifest. The interplay between these two diametrically opposed attitudes necessary for establishing that paradoxical "liminal" space where phantasy and reality could be bridged, was earlier described as the problem of bringing the Dionysian tendency which dissolves boundaries, into the structured Apollonian realm without destroying it (Segal, C., 1988, p. 15).

- Dionysian Masks: Identification with the Aggressor

At the following session, Steven appeared eager to begin the art activity and upon entering the room, from all of the materials displayed, he proceeded to choose plastercine in order to construct a "dragon with wings and teeth that breathes fire out of its mouth....(it) has claws and a horn on its head." (*Figures 3, 4 and 5*). This phantastic figure, armed with defensive features capable of tearing apart, cutting to pieces and devouring, is representative of primitive Dionysian trends arising from the cannibalistic impulses of the infant during the oral-sadistic phase. When these tendencies are split-off and projected outward into the real world, objects then acquire a persecutory and menacing character similar to the wild, devouring maenads who mirrored Pentheus' repressed destructive impulses (Roberts, 1975). When re-introjected, these objects become the harsh imagos that constitute the pre-oedipal super-ego and exert severe pressure on the ego. As a result, the child not only fears external objects that it equates with these terrifying figures, but also feels threatened by internalized ones. In view of these primitive processes that occur in early childhood, Klein stated, "...the man-eating wolf, the

*FIGURE 3*



*FIGURE 4*



*FIGURE 5*

fire-spewing dragon, and all the evil monsters out of myths and fairy tales flourish and exert their unconscious influence in the phantasy of each individual child and it feels itself persecuted and threatened by those evil shapes." (1975b, p. 249).

Due to these primitive mechanisms that are commonly employed by children and particularly by those like Steven in whom aggressive impulses are excessively repressed, these phantastic imagos of their inner world will frequently appear in their art and play (Seftel, 1987). When such menacing personifications of aggressive trends and primitive phantasies become manifest during the art therapeutic session, as they did previously in the form of the fighters or here, as the fire-breathing dragon, they could also be interpreted as an attempt to overcome anxiety by identifying with the aggressor (Kramer, 1971). This primitive identification mechanism caused by fear of retaliation from primitive objects, causes a "viscous circle of aggression" whereby the child feels constantly persecuted (Kramer, 1971, p. 175). Children will, therefore, adopt the attitude that "the best defense is a good offense" and consequently, they try to gain a sense of control over destructive impulses and hostile imagos by identifying with the unacceptable hostile parts of their own personalities which have been projected into the object (Neibauer, 1988, p. 11). In the transference situation, this scenario resembles that of the hunter and the hunted in The Bacchae, where due to the child's inability to develop a trusting relationship with the therapist that entails the ability to tolerate both feelings of loss and fear of dependency, instead, through projective identification, the object is experienced as the aggressor (Sandler, 1987).

The images produced when such a defensive identification is occurring often depict aggressive creatures which conceal underlying feelings of



vulnerability and fear. As long as these affects remain masked by violent content, the aggressive impulses and phantasies from which they have arisen are not being sublimated (Neibauer, 1988). Therapists will sometimes be misled into assuming that since violent phantasies have been given form, then aggression is released and "drained like an abscess" (Kohut, 1977, as cited by Neibauer, 1988, p. 10). Yet, such cathartic measures, earlier discussed in relation to Dionysian theater, do not necessarily assure that the material has been integrated or that insight has been gained. Rather, the creative process is used in a defensive manner whereby the child is shielded from seeing its own destructiveness and anxieties by identifying with the aggressor (ibid.).

In the transference situation, the therapist must be able to contain the child's negative projections without being destroyed by them, or behaving in a retaliatory manner, as did Pentheus' mother. By testing the therapist's ability to contain its violent impulses, feelings of security and trust eventually emerge which in turn mitigate the use of defensive identification. It is my belief that this sort of testing was symbolically expressed by Steven, when after completing the dragon, he raised it over his head and allowed it to drop several times on the table, laughing all the while because although the figure began to droop, it still remained intact. This playful testing of the object could, therefore, represent his impulse to destroy it in phantasy in order to determine if it has the capacity to withstand similar attacks in the future (Sefitel, 1987).

His need to reassure himself of the object's survival also became manifest in an environment he created for the dragon (*Figure 6*). He began by adding different coloured paints to his palette until a muddy mixture was created which he referred to as "mirasha". This substance, which he described as a "magic poison".



FIGURE 6

could be compared with lethal excrements used by the infant in phantasy to attack the object and defend itself during the anal-sadistic phase. In this image, the influence of anal-sadistic impulses is evident along with oral-sadistic ones, such as those contained in the features of teeth, claws, etc.

After surrounding the dragon by this poisonous mixture, Steven said: "Now I have to paint a bridge to save it." His wish to create this structure could be seen, on the one hand, as a desire to "bridge" communication with the therapist and thus develop a relationship based upon positive feeling, while on the other hand, it could also express his concern for the safety of the object that he attempts to rescue by providing a means of escape.

What occurred next was a disruption of the art activity, perhaps as a result of the emergence of latent, violent content in the image, which in turn, inspired fear in Steven that he would be unable to restore what had been damaged in his inner world. He, therefore, abandoned the art materials and inquired if he might use the detergent by the sink to "clean the mess". Thus began a compulsive ritual of cleaning which would be repeated many times over in the weeks that followed. This "reaction-formation" of over concern for cleanliness and order could be viewed as yet another Dionysian disguise which concealed his anal-sadistic destructive phantasies (Klein, 1975c, p. 165). The manic reparation entailed in these rituals were attempts to ward off feelings of guilt associated not only with pre-oedipal conflicts, but also those arising from his current home environment, where Steven's mother made stringent demands on cleanliness, as I was soon to discover from social workers and the client.

- The Double

The following week, Steven noticed a collection of found materials, such as newspaper, cardboard boxes and tubes, egg cartons, etc., that were recently brought in to be used in creating three dimensional objects. "I know", he exclaimed. "I'm going to make a tree that I saw on an art show on TV." (*Figure 7*). When I inquired if he did alot of art at home, he responded, "Yeah, because I play alone alot." I then asked if playing alone was not difficult at times, but he simply shrugged his shoulders and continued to work quietly, indicating that this attempt to encourage him to communicate feelings was probably premature.

As I watched him deftly rolling newspaper and then cutting the edges of the wrapped paper to create the foliage of the tree, it occurred to me that Steven might be reproducing an object that he had already practiced making before. His reliance on this type of "formula craft" which allows him to produce while engaged in a non-threatening activity, may have been influenced by his school environment's emphasis on products which was now displaced into the therapeutic situation (Kramer, 1971, p. 54). Stereotypical activities such as this, in addition, assist in distancing repressed aggressive impulses and may be executed in an effort to gain approval in order to reduce anxiety. Edith Kramer (1971), refers to this process as "art in the service of defense" (p. 54), which acts as a protective surface that conceals underlying chaos and is therefore, comparable to the Dionysian mask.

Although Steven continued to repeat this unvaried process many times, creating many trees similar in size, colour and shape, some phantasy emerged in the activity because he began to imagine using these forms to transform the room into "an island". I suggested that if he instructed me on how to construct a tree, I



FIGURE 7

might be able to assist him in making more of these structures for his environment and for the first time. I was invited to interact with him in the art process.

I once more assumed a non-directive supportive role where I followed his lead, encouraging in him a sense that he was the figure of authority. This role reversal, earlier compared to Pentheus' identification with Dionysos whereby the King becomes the god's double, may have provided Steven with the omnipotent control necessary to reduce his anxiety (Klein, 1975c). By mirroring his gestures with the art materials, non-verbal communication evolved that may have also contributed to the mitigation of his inhibition because, this time, when asked if he had ever seen a real island, he began to recount, in some detail, a period in his early childhood when he resided in Trinidad with his great-grandmother. He described this maternal figure as "very kind" and proceeded to nostalgically reminisce about the warm climate and beaches he had seen there. I was surprised by his sudden disclosure and wondered if perhaps some change in his perception of the therapeutic situation was beginning to develop where the therapist was perceived as a less threatening object.

What was not mentioned by the patient during this disclosure (but what I was aware of from the historical data in his chart), was the feeling of loss he must have endured when, at the age of two, his father had deserted the family and shortly thereafter, Steven was separated from his mother who sent him to live in Trinidad for two years with his great-grandmother. He then underwent another separation from this "kind" object with whom he had formed a close relationship, and was sent back to Montreal to be re-united with his biological mother.

These multiple separations and losses most likely inhibited his ability to

internalize a benign, consistent object that would allow him to maintain a sense of trust within the therapeutic alliance without developing doubts concerning the continuity of the object in his inner world (Nathans and Fleming, 1981).

Steven's repression of depressive anxiety stemming from these separations became manifest when he lost interest in building the forest and instead transformed one of the trees into a "rocket" that in turn, metamorphasized into another fire-breathing dragon (*Figure 8*). Anxiety, due to repressed emotions, may have led him to adopt this defensive stance that was influenced by aggressive impulses. His fear of abandonment and the subsequent threat of fragmentation to his ego was primarily evident in the construction of the dragon where he used exaggerated amounts of tape and glue, that could symbolically express his wish for symbiotic fusion as well as the need to hold together unintegrated parts of his inner world (Robbins and Goffia-Girasek, 1987)

This wish to merge with the ideal, longed for object, that in this instance is represented by the great-grandmother, could provide him with an illusory sense of security, a Dionysian disguise which serves to deny the object's vulnerability to attack. Yet, such omnipotent phantasy could also give rise to ambivalence since to achieve such fusion states, comparable to Dionysian ecstacy, the object must be orally incorporated which in turn, results in fear of being devoured in a similar manner (Nathans and Fleming, 1981). The defensive features of the dragon characterize these oral-sadistic trends originating from the earliest struggles of the infant. Hence, the ravenous mouth, powerful claws and the rigid metallic external surface, betray his underlying sense of defenselessness and destructive rage. Furthermore, the wings which were also featured in the plastercine dragon of the previous session, may be a symbolic representation of this need to take flight to the



*FIGURE 8*



ideal object of his inner world (Klein, 1975b).

- Sparagmos: Resurgence of Dionysian Excess

At our next meeting, Steven entered the room with a series of small toy soldiers that he wanted to display and play with during the session. Since he felt confident enough to share these objects of his private world without fear that they would be rejected, it occurred to me that this gesture may be evidence that some degree of trust had formed within the alliance. After examining the toys with Steven, I suggested that he might also use the art materials in his play to create an environment for the toys. Yet this suggestion was most likely experienced, once more, as a demand for a product or a restriction which did not allow him to use his time creatively as he chose, and his frustration as a consequence of this intrusion became manifest in the "war" game that followed.

He began by inquiring if in addition to the art materials he could also use the metallic dragon that he had produced the previous week (*Figure 8*). He then proceeded to impulsively attack the object first by pounding it with the toy soldiers and then by throwing missiles at it. These anal-sadistic attacks culminated in oral sadism where he began to tear the object to pieces until parts of it were strewn throughout the entire room. The *sparagmos* (rending to pieces) continued as his destructive impulsive behaviour escalated and he removed the original plastercine dragon from the cupboard where it was stored and attacked it in a similar manner until it also lay mangled and decapitated (*Figure 9*). After the destruction of the second dragon, the aggressive attacks and heightened excitement mitigated. At this point, I suggested to Steven that we could collect the pieces to use for making new forms in the future, in the hope of providing him with a sense that the damage



FIGURE 9

done to these objects was not irreparable and that something creative could result even from the destructive acts (Seftel, 1987).

War games, according to Klein, are typical of boys in latency and pre-puberty since they allow the child to symbolically enact combat with the castrating father and thus demonstrate that they too possess a powerful penis (1975c). Through destructive acts, boys can exercise and prove their skill in fighting, which in turn, helps to reduce castration anxiety. Although destructive impulses towards toys or art work could express their wish for strength comparable to that of an adult, Klein also held that due to the fear of castration and dread of punishment arising from the primitive sadistic super-ego, boys will frequently attempt to prove their strength by "becoming the aggressor" (1975b, p. 182). Such aggressive identifications and destructive acts could therefore, be viewed as Dionysian masks which conceal their overwhelming feelings of fear and guilt associated to genital and pre-genital conflicts.

Another issue which arose with this sudden influx of aggressive impulses was how or whether I should intervene to contain these primitive Dionysian tendencies which threatened to break through full force and dissolve the therapeutic frame. Over-reacting or prematurely limiting the destructive activity may have led Steven to assume that I did not trust in his ability to gain control over these impulses on his own and would, therefore, only confirm his underlying sense of dependency and impotence (Seftel, 1987). Furthermore, these outbursts may have been, as before, a testing of limits and of the therapist, to determine if the therapeutic frame could survive such attacks in the future. In this instance, limiting the impulsive behaviour would render the therapist a retaliatory and controlling object that is unable to withstand his rage (Seftel, 1987).

I finally decided to impose only one restriction which was that the destructive activity be directed at the art materials and inanimate objects rather than at himself or the therapist. By setting this limitation, which is comparable to Apollonian bounds that circumscribe and contain Dionysian excess, Steven may have felt that his behaviour would not be permitted to escalate completely out of control and result in an actual injury which would only heighten his anxiety and guilt (ibid.).

I continued to observe his playing, occasionally reflecting some of his actions or verbal associations, which he appeared to be communicating to some part of himself rather than to me, very much like an infant immersed in solitary play. Putting words to his actions could also be seen in the light of Apollonian *logos* (words which express inward thought or reason) which give form and meaning to chaotic Dionysian excess (Otto, 1954). This type of rapport with the client, where no in depth interpretations were given that at this point would only heighten his anxiety, may have led him to trust in his own capacity to contain his impulsive attacks on the object as well as lessened his fear of his aggression (Klein, 1975c). Steven's growing sense of confidence and control within this loosely structured frame became apparent towards the end of the session with the destruction of the plastery dragon that occurred within the bounded Apollonian frame of the art work (*Figure 9*) as compared with the diffused chaotic activity that dispersed the fragments of the first object throughout the entire room.

- Dionysos Clothed in Apollonian Shine

The following week, Steven found two paper bags and decided to make

puppets but after trying one on his hand became disappointed since the bag was "too big". His expressed desire to create two objects may have been an indication that he intended to engage me in his play but could not communicate this wish directly due to prior disappointing experiences where "too big" adults would not interact with him. He then inquired what else he could use to make puppets and I suggested paper maché. I also offered to play with him after their completion and he seemed genuinely pleased with the idea.

The actual process of constructing the puppet extended over a period of four weeks during which Steven displayed much enthusiasm and patience. Since, at present, it is not feasible to describe the process in detail, I have chosen to highlight only certain relevant events that contributed to my understanding of this patient. For example, although I had to assume a more directive role in the preparation of the art materials, on this occasion rather than displaying boredom or compliance, Steven was actively asking questions and exploring the tactile quality of the art materials. It is my belief that due to this playful interaction that was occurring through the multi-sensory experience of the medium, Steven was able to overcome his anxious need to control and this, in turn, enabled him to accept ideas other than his own (Robbins and Cavallo, 1980). Moreover, his verbal inhibitions were reduced and his associations became more fluid since he was able to give Apollonian form to his creative and destructive trends as well as symbolically communicate his inner strivings through the medium (Stokes, 1958).

A series of verbal associations followed as he manipulated the warm paper pulp and glue mixture which were expressions of early pleasurable kinesthetic and tactile experiences of the mother's body and a satisfying breast. Comments such as "mmm... it feels good" and "yum, yum" or associations such as "its a baby with an

open mouth" were also indicative of the beginning of an improved object relationship that was emerging as a result of his growing sense of trust and positive feeling towards the external object. The new channels of sublimation and symbolization that were now becoming accessible to him were also the outcome of his growing awareness of a whole and separate object in the real world, earlier associated with Apollo, the god of contemplative distance and clarity of perception (Sallis, 1991). The object's separate existence further led to a concern for its survival which was symbolically expressed in Steven's persistent inquiries as to whether the puppet's head, which had taken the form of "a dog with ears", would "hold together" when he returned from the two week Christmas break. He finally concluded that he would "probably forget about it" while he was gone, a comment which, on the one hand may have expressed his unconscious fear that the object would perish or fade in his internal world as others had done before, while on the other, also showed his desire for its survival in the real world.

- Dionysian Hubris: Manic Repair

After returning from the holiday break, Steven displayed some ambivalent feelings towards the therapist who may not have survived as a good internal object in his phantasy due to the two week separation. This was revealed in the "What Pops Into Your Mind" game, a game devised by Selma Fraiberg (1966) to teach children how to free associate (p. 222). The proceeding discourse evolved while Steven adhered the two halves of the puppet's head with plaster of Paris (*Figure 10*. The completed puppet can also be viewed in *Figures 11 and 12*):

I: Quick...first thing that pops into your mind.

S: Uh....turtle.



FIGURE 10



FIGURE 11





FIGURE 12

- T: Why turtle?
- S: Because it has a shell.
- T: What's the shell for?
- S: To protect it against the dragon...and if a car hits it, its head won't smash. The car will just bounce right off.
- T: It's important for the shell to be strong?
- S: Yeah. and I'm going to put even more of these (plaster strips) to make it even stronger.

The indestructibility of the object, as described metaphorically by the patient, could be representative of his sense of omnipotence, a Dionysian disguise that resulted in relation to guilt arising from his sadistic phantasies (Klein, 1975c). These sadistic assaults on the object that followed due to his frustration and fear of abandonment during the separation, were apparent not only in his reference to earlier sessions where he had assumed a similar defensive stance (i.e. the giraffe with boxing gloves that might be "hit by a car" or his identification with the fire-breathing dragon), but also in the art process itself. His belief in his omnipotence led to the compulsive and exaggerated action of adding greater amounts of plaster strips to the object, a reaction-formation that corresponded to his destructive trends, which Klein refers to as "omnipotent creation" (ibid). Such omnipotent restitutive phantasies are comparable to Dionysian *hubris*, the belief that one can become the god and thus escape mortality and human weakness. Hubris was the crime of insolence that Pentheus was so severely punished for when he identified with Dionysos.

Steven's need to defend himself from internal danger that followed the annihilation of the object in his phantasy was further demonstrated when the head

of the puppet was put aside to dry and he commenced playing with the headless cloth body of the puppet. "Hey, I don't have a head", he exclaimed. "I can't find it because I'm blind...have you seen it?" As he knocked the object about pretending he could not see, my impression was that he might be seeking a reliable object on which he could depend for affirmation and mirroring.

Another interpretation of this play activity is that he was metaphorically expressing his desire to see and acquire knowledge about external dangers which could be more easily controlled than the internal threats arising from the primitive objects of his super-ego (Klein, 1975(a)). By externalizing and displacing the anxiety stemming from internal dangers to the outside world, he could thereby discover more about their true nature and test by reality, whether the defensive measures he had taken against them were effective (ibid.). This "instinct for knowledge", although arising from primitive constituents of the psyche that are personified by Dionysos, is associated here with the Apollonian tendency since this god represented clarity of perception unlike Dionysian vision which blurs the real with the imaginary (Klein, 1975c, p. 175).

- The Maenad: Transference and the Combined-Parent Imago

The next session began with Steven wanting to create an architectural structure similar to one made by another client, that due to its large size, was stored on the counter where it was visible. This wish to create a structure similar to the other child's may have been the consequence of sibling rivalry that was displaced from his sister onto the children in his school environment with whom he had to share the teacher's attention. Hostile feelings towards the teacher followed since he perceived her as showing preference to the other children and

this envious reaction was revealed in the discourse that took place during the construction of the object:

S: Even when I get up to sharpen my pencil, I have to go stand in the corner.

T: Really, well that's not fair is it?

S: Yeah, and the teacher never punishes the girls because she likes them better.

There was evidence that similar feelings were now being transferred to the therapeutic situation because even prior to commencing the activity, Steven sought information about the other children with whom I met for sessions. This intense desire for knowledge about the other children who existed not only in his actual environment, but also imaginary ones existing inside the mother's body, found expression in a sudden impulse to open all the drawers and cupboards to look at the artwork that was stored there. This search eventually led to his own storage area containing the fragments of the destroyed dragons from the previous session which he decided to re-use to create a new form. This need to create from what had been previously destroyed may have been an indication that his restitutive trends were promoted by the dissolution of the object, a theme which is reminiscent of the "circuit of transgression, disruption and reinstatement" inspired by the combined Apollonian/Dionysian tendencies in the art process (Sallis, 1991, p. 58). These processes will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter on aesthetic appreciation and sublimation, but for the moment, I wish to return to some of the internal dynamics that became manifest in this session and which were earlier illumined in the Bacchae.

As Steven worked, the object began to acquire a phallic-like form and became "a gun" which he was going to use to defend himself "against bad men" (*Figure 13*). "I'm going to make this (the gun) taller than my mother", he said. "I take after my father and he's really tall...I'll even be taller than him and he can't even fit through this door." This omnipotent phantasy about the absent parent's penis may have been a sign of an awakening heterosexual attitude which is typical of pre-puberty boys and develops due to the resurgence of genital impulses. As a consequence, Steven was experiencing feelings of rivalry towards the father for possession of the mother that were symbolically expressed by his comparison of the size and potential of the phallic object (Klein, 1975c).

Yet, this competitive attitude, whether directed at siblings or at the father figure, was also coloured by envy and hatred particularly since in boys, incestuous desire for the primary object brings forth fear of castration and a sense of impotence (Klein, 1975c). Dependency on the mother and omnipotence were also intensified due to the absence in his home environment of a real male figure of authority whom he could identify with. Similar to Pentheus who lacked a benign father-imago, had such an object been present in Steven's life, his admiration and love for him would have countered the negative feelings arising from the bad internalized father and would subsequently assist him in detaching from the mother (Klein, 1975c). This anxious attachment to the primary object was revealed in the dramatic play that followed.

Steven initiated a war game, which as mentioned earlier, is typical of pre-puberty boys who, by performing heroic feats and demonstrating their skill with machines, can prove that their strength equals that of the father and that they too can gain possession of the mother (Klein, 1975c). But like the child-king



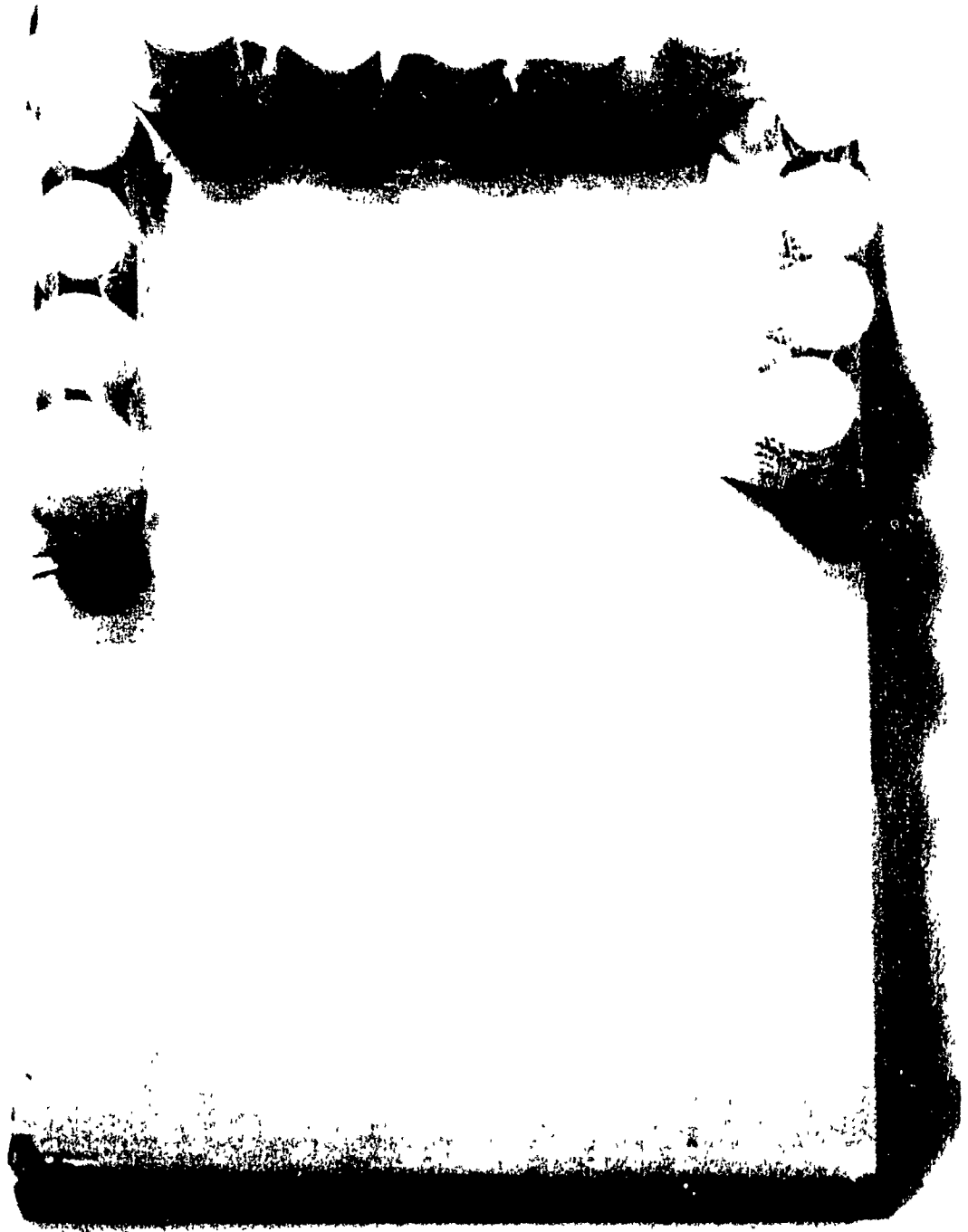
FIGURE 13

Pentheus, and even Dionysos, who was raised and sheltered by the maenads. Steven had been reared mostly by women. His strong identification with them became manifest when this war game which entailed "killing the bad men" was interrupted and a new game commenced.

This phantasy revealed the re-emergence of earlier, pre-oedipal conflicts where the mother is feared as a rival. Klein refers to this internal dynamic that is common in the sexual development of boys, as the "femininity phase" (1975c, p. 240). She postulates that this phase arises as the result of intense fear and hatred of the father's penis which is displaced onto the mother. Distorted infantile phantasies of the parents copulating further intensifies the boy's fear and sadism since the bad penis is imagined as existing "inside his mother" so that she comes to be viewed as a "combined bad-parent imago" (ibid., p. 242). Dionysos who is depicted as effeminate, attracting both men and women, as well as the maenads, who possess a magic wand that is equivalent to the omnipotent sadistic penis, can be seen as personifications of such distorted joint parent figures (Roberts, 1975).

A combined parent imago now appeared in Steven's dramatic play when after quickly constructing "a shield that fires bullets", I was equipped with this weapon and assigned the role of "the enemy" (*Figures 14*). A chase ensued where Steven and I hid behind furniture in the room until he asked me to shoot him. Although I hesitated doing so at first, I finally and reluctantly agreed to shoot him since I realized that a certain degree of trust in me as a good object had probably developed if he was able to use me this way in his dramatic play.

Even though the wound was not fatal, nevertheless, I was sent to "jail" as punishment for causing the injury. While sitting powerless in confinement, as did



*FIGURE 14*



the maenads and Dionysos when they were imprisoned by Pentheus. Steven continued to fight imaginary "bad men" until suddenly, he exclaimed, "Look, there's one behind the coat!" He was now pointing his gun at an old smock I sometimes wore to protect my clothing during sessions. He began to fire the weapon at my coat and finally said, "Hey, that was my mother!" When I inquired what happened to her, Steven replied, "Oh, nothing. It was only on 'stun'. She's going to get up now...Oh, hi Mom!"

Although inverted oedipal issues were brought to the fore in this dramatic play where damage to the threatening mother had occurred in his phantasy, my sense that positive feeling had previously developed towards the real object within the therapeutic alliance, was confirmed when the plot underwent another change. This time, after Steven released me from "prison", I was given the role of assisting him in destroying all his "enemies" with the use of my shield, that like the penis in phantasy, had the potential both to destroy and to protect him from harm. In retrospect, I now view these variegated roles that he had me assume as indicating that although he could use me to personify threatening figures from his inner world, a protective, good object had also been internalized that could be drawn upon when he needed support.

- Dionysian Fusion: Projective Identification

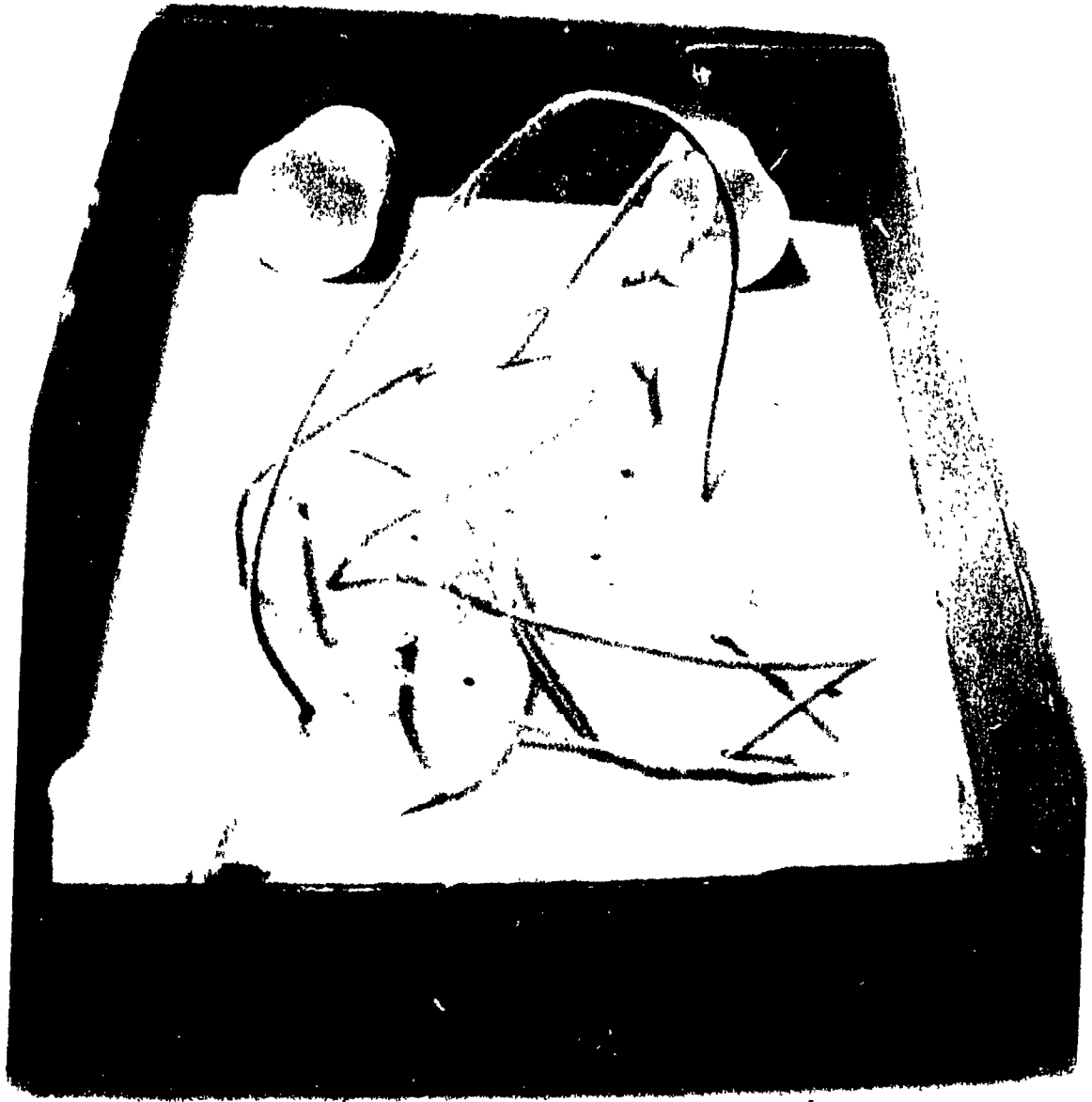
Several weeks passed and we were now approaching the end of the school year. I had already mentioned to Steven in a previous session that termination was imminent, but he appeared not to display any overt reaction to this announcement, until this session where he became verbally withdrawn and unwilling to engage in the art process. I attributed his resistance and detachment which are comparable to

defensive Dionysian masks, as stemming from his underlying frustration and anger over the separation.

These concealed emotions became evident when, while sitting with his head resting on the table and idly playing with a film screen that served as a make-shift cover for a two way mirror, he asked if I would accompany him to the after-school movie. I replied that although I would very much like to join him, I had to leave early that afternoon and he responded with apparent disappointment. "You always have to leave." He then asked if I would stay for "phase day", a weekly event where children were gathered and given points for good behaviour. He stated that he was sure he would pass this time and recognizing his need for affirmation and approval, I responded that I would attend.

Suddenly, his eyes became fixed on something on the floor by the sink and he exclaimed, "Look, a fish!" I followed his gaze and saw a silver fish scurrying near the counter. At this point, Steven sprang from his seat, found a paper cup and with deft and skill, trapped the insect in its interior.

"I know", he said, "I'm going to build a condominium for him. I always play with them (the insects) at home but my mother hates them because she thinks they're dirty and kills them." As he began to construct the environment (*Figure 15*), he asked, "I like the little guys. They're cute. Do you like them?" I believe that at this point, Steven was using the primitive mechanism, projective identification, that was earlier compared with Dionysian fusion states, whereby he was displacing "hated" and "dirty" parts of himself into the insect. His inquiry as to whether I liked the insect may have arisen due to his need to attain approval and acceptance from the external object for these rejected parts. This approval, when



*FIGURE 15*

re-introjected, would alter his negative perception of them as well (Sandler, 1987).

Steven created the environment using paper cups ("so he can go inside") and pipe cleaners ("for him to climb on") and when the object was complete, he said, "This is going to be a fun place and I'm going to feed him sweet things and milk so he can grow." Although these comments may have, on the one hand, metaphorically expressed his need for a nurturing object that would "feed" him, as well as a supportive environment in which his skill and mastery could be reflected back to him (climbing the pipe cleaners) at the same time, these associations may have been expressing his inability to separate from such a space. This fear of loss was apparent in his oral-incorporative phantasy where, an endless supply of "sweet things and milk" from an idealized breast would provide him with a "strength" that would render him invulnerable to the pain of separation. Such flight to the ideal breast, analogous to Pentheus' wish to possess the Maenad's miraculous abilities to produce milk, wine and honey from the earth, is therefore also indicative of the denial of loss and depressive anxiety which are characteristic of fusion states produced by projective identification (Segal, II., 1991).

Projecting unwanted parts of the self onto the external object results not only in a denial of separation, but also in an effort to possess and control the threatening imagos that are projected into the external world. Evidence of this dynamic began to manifest when after completing the environment, Steven placed the insect in the interior of the box and began to "force" it to "get into the middle and climb up." His need for control was further demonstrated when he commanded, "Hey! Get up there!" and then proceeded to tap the exterior of the box with the end of a pencil in an effort to make the insect do his bidding

"He doesn't want to climb up", he said. "He wants to climb the walls and escape." When I inquired if Steven ever felt as if he were "climbing the walls" or trapped, he replied, "When I'm at school or when people tell me I can't do things." These associations may have metaphorically expressed his unconscious fear of being engulfed or trapped inside the mother's body that arises from fusion states, or *ekstasis*, where subject and object are merged. His sense of powerlessness in a real world where he was "forced" to perform in order to gain approval and thus feel accepted by external objects was also contained in these comments.

While observing the insect trying to escape, Steven finally concluded, "He'll get used to it", a remark which could be interpreted as expressing his sense of having to adapt to the demands of reality, as well as to accepting feelings of loss that arise with the termination of sessions. As he continued to force his will upon the insect, he finally decided that if he found "the little guy a friend, then maybe he would want to stay" This association, while revealing his feelings of isolation in the real world, also may have expressed an unconscious wish for a continuous whole object in the external world to help him let go of old ties and thereby make the transition from primitive Dionysian states of dependency to a state of self-sufficiency and more consistent ego-boundaries that characterize the Apollonian.

One last point that needs to be addressed concerning Steven's predominant use of projective identification to defend against feelings of loss, is the effect this primitive mechanism had on the therapist. For example, earlier in the session when Steven captured the insect and asked if I also thought he was "cute", my true reaction was in fact, that the insect was repulsive and "dirty". This response, which although on the one hand, could be counter-transferential as a result of my own unresolved feelings surrounding these creatures, could also have arisen due to

an identification with the feelings of rejection that Steven experienced from his mother that were now being forced into the therapist. By accepting his wish to play with the insect as well as mirroring back that it was "cute" rather than repulsive, these rejected parts of his personality that in the past he only wished to eject, were now altered from hated to good. Once re-introjected, these altered parts could then be used to enhance his personality rather than deplete it (Goldstein, 1991).

The situation being described here reflects instances where a therapist may have come under the influence of projective identification or counter-transference during the therapy session. As a result, the therapist experiences a sense of discomfort or other more intense feelings such as vulnerability, depression, fear, etc. which cannot be attributed to their present interpersonal interactions with the patient and in these situations, must examine their own unresolved conflicts, or counter-transference, which may have given rise to such feelings (Goldstein, 1991).

If the therapist's sense of discomfort has not arisen due to unresolved issues as related to counter-transference (and this should always be considered), then it may be the result of the patient projecting these feelings onto the therapist who is then forced to think, behave and feel correspondingly, or in other words, identify with the projections (Grotstein and Malin, 1966).

As mentioned above, the purpose of this primitive process of projective identification in the therapeutic situation, is firstly to split off and project unwanted parts of the self into the therapist in order to attain control of the external object or to deny separation and secondly, to modify the quality of these rejected parts of the

ego from unacceptable to good. By projecting them into the recipient, they are altered and in turn, re-internalized, promoting growth and change in the ego (Goldstein, 1991). These interactive processes whether they derive from transference, counter-transference or projective identification, can be found not only in the therapeutic situation but in all human interactions (ibid).

### 3.7 Summary of Sessions

I have attempted to show throughout this presentation of clinical material how the Apollonian and Dionysian model can be used by therapists to provide them with a deeper understanding of the phenomena they observe in their work with clients. However, it is important to bring to the attention of the reader that the clinical issues discussed in this section were not originally considered in relation to this theoretical framework during the course of the therapeutic sessions but were instead enhanced and expanded upon in conjunction with this Apollonian/Dionysian model after the data had been collected as a means of analyzing and understanding the inter-personal and intra-psyche dynamics that had been documented.

Some of the clinical issues illuminated were centered on primitive internal processes characterized by excess and arising from Dionysian trends which were gradually modified as a result of the formation of the therapeutic alliance. One of the major pre-conditions for this progressive movement towards the Apollonian tendency which demands the observation of limits and moderation, a greater sense of reality, the emergence of genital trends and the need to make restitution, was the mitigation of anxiety arising from the super-ego. This change came about as Steven gradually came to trust in a supportive friendly object in the real world that

in turn, inspired in him a sense of "pity" for the suffering of the internal object (Klein, 1975c, p. 153). Trust and positive feelings toward the therapist, therefore, countered his destructive, sadistic tendencies and consequently, the severity of the primitive super-ego was also reduced.

Yet this "reaction-formation" of concern for the fate of the internalized benign object, that is comparable to the empathic identification of the spectator to the suffering of the tragic hero, would not have evolved had Steven been forced to confront, too abruptly, those Dionysian masks, or defenses, which concealed unfamiliar parts of his personality. The tragic mask also mirrors the paradoxical space of tragic theater which was earlier compared with the therapeutic situation. Charles Segal describes this liminal space, where reality and illusion are bridged, as follows:

...by creating illusion, tragedy seeks to convey truth; by causing us to lose ourselves it gives us a deeper sense of ourselves; and by representing events filled with the most intense pain it gives us pleasure (Segal, C., 1982, p. 216).

This interplay between the real and the imaginary also came about as a consequence of the communication that developed not only between the therapist and the subject but also through the "internal communication" that took place between the patient and his own unconscious as a result of symbol formation (Segal, H., 1957, p. 396). The word symbol itself derives from the Greek term which signifies a coming together or integration (ibid.). The integrative potential of symbols in artistic creation, aesthetic appreciation and in ego development, will presently be explored in the following chapter in light of Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies.



## CHAPTER IV

### 'THE ABYSS': THE APOLLONIAN AND DIONYSIAN TENDENCIES AS ARTISTIC IMPULSES

#### 4.1 Constructive and Destructive Tendencies in Artistic Creation

Thus far, this study has presented the Apollonian and Dionysian as antithetical tendencies that coexist on a continuum. However, the boundaries that differentiate and set in opposition the various feeling states, impulses and defense mechanisms personified by these two deities are not always clear, as for example the demarcation between moderation and excess; illusion and reality; dissolution and integration, etc. This last chapter will primarily focus on the paradoxical relationship between madness and artistic creation that has been noted by theorists from the times of Homer, Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece, to modern psychodynamic theorists (Simon, 1978). For instance, in Plato's Phaedrus, Socrates states: "Our greatest blessings come to us from madness...provided the madness is given us by divine gift." (Socrates as cited by Dodds, 1951, p. 64). He then continues to describe four types of divine madness: Prophetic madness inspired by Apollo; Telestic madness whose patron is Dionysos; Poetic madness deriving from the Muses and Erotic Madness given by Aphrodite and Eros (ibid). It is not necessary for the purposes of this study, to define each of these four types of madness, which for the Greeks of the fifth century, gave rise to all inspiration. But what is significant to mention here is that these divine gifts allowed those who received them to control and direct their "ecstatic" energies into sublime creative activities (Simon, 1978, p. 151).

Divine madness, which was conducive to the structuring and advancement

of civilization, also differed from disease that arose from natural causes and became manifest in an uncontrollable or excessive form (ibid). Today, although modern psychodynamic theorists who investigate artistic creativity have dropped the notion of divine inspiration, nevertheless it is still held that if art is produced to thwart neurosis, madness and ennui, then it must contain a bit of that madness (Segal, C., 1982). For instance, we have seen in Melanie Klein's writings that creativity is an attempt to overcome guilt and depression arising from the pain of losing a loved object that was destroyed in phantasy due to persecutory anxiety. These primitive driving forces that play a key role in the restoration of the object and thus, in all sublimations, are rooted in two forms of psychotic anxieties, namely: the persecutory and depressive types. Hence, the premise that "a touch of madness is associated with creativity" is not an unfamiliar one to theorists who maintain a psychoanalytic approach to aesthetics such as: Marion Milner, Adrian Stokes, Hanna Segal and others who have been mentioned herein (Simon, 1978, p. 151). What I now propose to expand upon, in light of this theme, is the Apollonian and Dionysian as artistic impulses as they relate to illusion, imagination, symbol formation and creative expression.

#### 4.2 The Transgression and Dissolution of Apollonian Boundaries

The term excess has been used repeatedly in and throughout this work to describe the Dionysian tendency. For instance, in the preceding chapter, Dionysian *mania* or *ecstasis* was regarded in light of the intra-psychic and interpersonal dynamics that were made manifest in art therapy sessions with a latency aged boy. Some of the phenomena observed that arose from the transgression of Apollonian boundaries and the crossing over into Dionysian excess included: the exceeding of the limits of the therapeutic frame; manic reparation or inhibition in

the art process: aggressive acting out with the art products: and the merging of the self with the object in the transference situation, otherwise referred to as projective identification.

It is important to clarify, at this point, that within this context, Dionysian madness should not be conceived of in literal terms as suggesting that the young boy who is the subject of this case presentation had a predisposition for any serious psychological disorder, nor was there any attempt made to arrive at a diagnosis or prognosis based upon the clinical evidence. The *mania* or *enthousiasmos* elicited by the "Mad" god, Dionysos, has been used herein to metaphorically describe Dionysian ecstasy which in its essence, is excess itself (Sallis, 1991).

However, one can also assert, as did Klein, that the "boundary" that separates neurosis from healthy development is "excess" (1975c, p. 178). Such transgression of boundaries is evident in the exaggerated use of compulsive rituals and the proliferation of primitive conflicts due to strong repression that occur in latency and which also show little distinction from the obsessional traits of the neurotic (ibid). Yet to assume such a sharp distinction is also to artificially divide the variant ego states and artistic forces embodied in the Apollonian/Dionysian unity, and opposition described by Nietzsche as "monstrous" since these two tendencies are so intricately interrelated (Sallis, 1991, p. 20).

As such, the case presentation is not aimed at providing diagnostic criteria that typifies what might be considered normal or pathological development but instead it is an attempt to illustrate the progressions, reversions and fluctuations of the subject's ego, in relation to its objects, from the exorbitant Dionysian, with its primitive excesses and pre-oedipal conflicts, to the more moderate, genital trends

of the Apollonian that are in harmony with reality.

Dionysos *Lusios* (the Loosener), as an artistic impulse, liberates the creative and destructive forces that go into a work of art (Simon, 1978). However, as noted by various theorists even as early as Socrates, the complete abandon of such exuberance, if not contained or channeled into some balanced form, will not contribute to the development of art, civilization or the individual. Conversely, this type of unrestrained discharge could lead to Dionysian *mania* or *ekstasis*, that is characterized by such variant states as: "dismemberment, fusion to fragmentation, ecstasy to an abyss of sorrow and inconceivable horror, possession by a wild boundless energy to emptiness and annihilation, frenzied communion to isolation and despair" (Savitz, C., 1990, p. 41). Such contrasting states occurring in Dionysian ecstasy or what Nietzsche has also referred to as the "boundless abyss" is experienced when one is under the intoxication of the god and the boundaries of the self are obliterated (Sallis, 1991, p. 4). This terror and exaltation arising from the dissolution of the self, is what the artist undergoes as he crosses over into the abyss while simultaneously striving with his artistic skills to master chaos, form and drive (Simon, 1978). Walter Otto (1965) describes this dissolution of the artist to achieve his art as follows:

He who begets something which is alive must dive down into the primeval depths in which the forces of life dwell. And when he rises to the surface there is a gleam of madness in his eyes because in those depths death lives cheek by jowl with life (p. 137).

Opposites such as joy and pain, wild and gentle, destructive and creative, unite in this Dionysian realm as they do within the dual nature of the god himself. For this reason, Dionysos was known as the god "without shape" or with "many

shapes" such as the snake, lion, bull, dolphin, adolescent boy, man, woman, etc. (Segal, C., 1982, p. 258). He had any form that was projected onto him and this ability to transgress the boundaries that define, measure and order everyday reality, as well as his ability to render what is concrete into something fluid and everchanging, is the very essence of symbol formation (ibid). For this reason Nietzsche associated the Dionysian with "imageless music (that has the potential) with its primal joy experienced even in pain...to make one tremble at the edge of the abyss" (Nietzsche, 1871, as cited by Sallis, 1991, p. 98).

The artist must have the ability to safely cross into the abyss where he will undergo *sparagmos* (dismemberment) and re-emerge whole again because without this dissolution of the self, without some loss, nothing new will come into being (Segal, C., 1982). Marion Milner (1952) describes this loss of self as the "aesthetic moment" which is defined as follows:

There is a temporary loss of self, a temporary giving up of the discriminating ego which stands apart and tries to see things objectively and rationally without emotional colouring." (p. 189)

This transient loss of self occurs not only when the artist is immersed in the creative process but also when an empathic identification develops between the spectator and a work of art so that for a brief time, he fuses and becomes one with the external object. Temporary fusion states are characterized by Milner more specifically when she cites Berenson in the following passage:

He ceases to be his ordinary self and the picture or building, statue, landscape or aesthetic actuality is no longer outside himself. The two become one entity: time and space are abolished and the spectator is possessed by one awareness. When he recovers

workaday consciousness it is as if he had been initiated into illuminating, formative mysteries" (Berenson, 1950, as cited by Milner, 1952, p. 189).

The preceding quote describes a temporary sacrifice or surrender of the artist's subjectivity to the Dionysian artistic process analogous to the sacrificial rending of the infant, Dionysos, in the hands of the Titans (Sallis, 1991). John Sallis refers to this process as the "abysmal Dionysian circuit" whereby a "transgression and disruption" of the limits that circumscribe the self occurs, followed by a "reinstatement" or rebirth of the individual when reality returns to the consciousness (p. 72). Art is a means of symbolically reproducing this circuit of ecstasy, a state which is not dissimilar to the infant's earliest experiences of union with the primary incorporated object, when the boundaries that distinguish what is inside and what is outside, are not yet clearly defined (Milner, 1952).

Some psychoanalytic theorists have referred to this union as a state of "oceanic bliss" where the infant is fused with an all gratifying idealized object. The difficulty in conceiving of this ecstatic state, in which inner and outer meet, only in blissful and peaceful terms, as does Winnicott in his "transitional space", is that it ignores the paradoxical duality of this realm which is both terrible and gentle like the god himself (Savitz, 1990, p. 47). The Dionysian paradoxical realm must also include the extreme, ugly fusion states that are comprised of an "evil union" between an "evil me and an evil you" (Milner, 1952, p. 188). Such states arise upon the infant's first growing awareness that it is separate from the primary object and at the same time, totally dependent upon her for its survival (Roberts, 1975). As a result, a fear of abandonment and starvation, greedy attacks on the object follow as well as feelings of helplessness that accompany the realization of the object's power and which lead to a persecutory situation and a wish to be once

again fused with her in a blissful unity (ibid). This ambivalence of feelings where the infant splits the object into idealized and persecutory parts and which characterize the nascent ego's earliest struggles to reunite and subsequently separate out and redelineate itself must be considered since to deny this ugliness is to overlook the chthonic side of Dionysos which embodies the violence, destruction and death that are integral to the creative process (Savitz, 1990). Instead, this paradoxical space, where the closest proximity exists between illusion and reality, horror and joy, creativity and destructiveness, should be thought of as "liminal" (Segal, 1982, p. 19). Here, where the cycle of ego dissolution and re-integration occurs, old structures are dissolved and elements come together in different ways to create new forms that mirror the horror and beauty of the Dionysian. Without this restructuring that becomes possible only through the Apollonian principles of order, measure and contemplation from a distance, a safe crossing into and out of the Dionysian abyss would not be feasible and the imagos, affects and processes that constitute this inner realm would remain in their primitive state, unchanged over time (Savitz, 1990).

#### 4.3 Apollonian Sublime Images: The Safe Crossing

For Nietzsche (1871), this liminal field where opposites unite, existed in Attic tragedy because within this space, formless Dionysian profusion achieved through music and dance, was liberated into "Apollonian distancing images" (Sallis, 1991, p. 97). These Apollonian images of tragic drama were comprised of the highly ordered and traditional form of the lyrical poetry, the beauty of the dramatic scenes, as well as the logical outcome of the tragic events in the plot. All these formal elements when combined, spared the spectator and the artist from being completely absorbed into the abysmal (ibid). Thus, the imageless Dionysian

was disclosed in Apollonian sublime images that were made visible on the proscenium. As such, Apollonian images provide a safe crossing that gives relief and distance from the dangers of disintegration, loss and emptiness that can occur when one is exposed to the abyss (Sallis, 1991). These representations consequently exemplify that wholeness can be restored and life can be reinstated after dismemberment or annihilation of the individual. For this reason, Nietzsche proposes in the following quote from The Birth of Tragedy (1871), that these sublime images, which exist not only in the space of tragedy, but in all aesthetic form, are created when the artist takes parts of the world and builds them into his art in a process of "self-definition, self-discovery and self-enlargement" (May, 1990, p. 29). Nietzsche compares this "artistic play" of the artist to that of a child playing in sand that, like the gods whose artistic play produces the sublime image of the world, must destroy in order to re-create:

In this world, only the play of the artist and of the child displays a becoming and perishing, a building and destroying, without any moral attribution, in forever equal innocence. And as the child and the artist play, so plays the ever-living fire. It builds and destroys in innocence - and this is the play that the aeon plays with itself. Transforming itself into water and earth, it builds towers of sand like a child at the seashore, builds them up and tramples them down (Nietzsche as translated by Sallis, 1991, p. 106).

The image created by the artist, that has the power to restore and create life out of the fragments of that which was destroyed, is what has frequently been referred to as the "eternal" in art (Rickman, 1940, p. 307). The timeless or immortal quality of a work of art, confirms that the artist has undergone the violence, suffering and destruction of the abyss but has triumphed over death by creating concrete proof of his survival in the form of his creations (ibid). It affirms



that a safe crossing has been made from the Dionysian to the Apollonian and thus, that the circuit of transgression, disruption and reinstatement has been completed.

This reversion of death, the only effect in nature which is irreversible, is also the gratifying quality of a work of art and constitutes its beauty (Rickman, 1940). Without an interplay between life and death, love and hate, madness and order, that is, without some element of "ugliness", a work of art would be reduced to something merely "pretty" or "soulless", devoid of any aesthetically satisfying value (Segal, H., 1952, p. 206). Hence, if we take for example, the timeless classical beauty of the works by the great Greek tragedians, they embody within their harmonious and perfected Apollonian forms, the horrors of primitive Dionysian phantasies (ibid).

However, some degree of denial is integral to this eternal aspect of art, where life is victorious over death, since in the real world, death cannot be surmounted (Rickman, 1940). Denial is therefore the "illusion" created by art, comparable to the Dionysian mask that simultaneously reveals and conceals reality (ibid, p. 308). This illusion allows both the artist and his audience to "face" or "re-live" emptiness, chaos and death, as well as the blissful exuberance that gives rise to aesthetic experience (Rickman, 1940, p. 308). Furthermore, theorists who propound a psychoanalytic approach to aesthetics agree that the degree of denial of death is less in art than in any other sublimation activity since it is only in aesthetic experience that illusion can occur in such close proximity to reality (Segal, H., 1952).

That which bridges illusion and reality and subsequently, allows the artist to share his experiences of depression, death and rebirth with his audience is his use

of symbols. By mirroring reality, symbols can be viewed as those Apollonian "distancing images" that prevent both the artist and audience from becoming completely absorbed into the abysmal (Nietzsche, 1871, as cited by Sallis, 1991, p. 97).

#### 4.4. Symbolization and Sublimation: Dionysian Excess Clothed in Apollonian Shine

Symbols also reveal the co-existence of opposites in the inner world and at the core of these Apollonian representations are the principles of reversibility, flux and illusion that characterize Dionysian mania (Segal, C., 1982). Hence, the Dionysian, as an art impulse, personifies the driving force behind symbol formation.

The Apollonian art impulse, on the other hand, consists of the artist's engagement in the actual process of creating the shapes and forms that mediate between illusion and reality, inner and outer, life and death (ibid). However, the Apollonian is not merely comprised of the creative *activity* that produces symbols, but it is also the symbol itself or the "distancing image" which has the ability to make visible, contain and tame the Dionysian, thus providing a safe passage (Sallis, 1991, p. 27).

A closer examination of symbols shows that they too, like the artistic creations that they shape, are imbued with a touch of Dionysian madness. What is being alluded to here is the differentiation between the "symbol proper", used in communication and sublimation as a means of overcoming loss and depressive anxiety, as opposed to the "concrete symbolic equation" which is used to deny loss

(Segal, II., 1957, p. 395). The real symbol forms during the depressive position where due to a more developed awareness of reality, separation from the primary object and the mitigation of omnipotent thought, the real symbol comes to "represent" the lost object and can be used freely as a means of restoring it (ibid). For example, art materials such as clay, paint, stone, etc., if perceived as *representations* of internalized or real objects, can retain some of their own characteristics and properties and may consequently be used for sublimation (ibid). It follows that real symbols can be viewed on the Apollonian/Dionysian continuum as inclining more towards the Apollonian tendency as this deity personifies clarity of form, measure and distance (Otto, 1954). Apollo also insisted upon the ability to perceive objectively and accurately which was equivalent to "knowing the true essence of things and their interrelationships" (ibid, p. 72).

The Dionysian tendency on the other hand, consists of a blurred, ecstatic vision where the distinction between what is inside and what exists outside is indeterminate and the world is viewed as an amalgam of fluid forms that melt and merge into one another. This ecstatic vision, which also characterizes the infant's first object relations, as well as the intoxicated gaze of one who is under the influence of the 'Wine' god, has an affinity with the distorted perception and disorganized symbolization featured in psychotic disturbances (Segal, II., 1957). The principal cause of this vague formlessness, which is personified by the 'Mad' god, Dionysos, is that there occurs a lack of differentiation between the ego and the object and, in turn, between the symbol and the thing symbolized (ibid). Consequently, the object symbolized is equated with the object itself and such "symbolic equations" also referred to as "concrete symbols", represent the type of concrete thought associated with schizophrenia and other psychotic illnesses.

Concrete symbols, according to Hanna Segal (1957), arise during the paranoid schizoid position, where due to excessive sadism and fear of loss, parts of the ego and internalized objects are projected into external objects, which then become identified with the self since the self is felt to contain these parts. This process of projective identification, whereby the differentiation between self and object is blurred, is the prototype of symbol formation (ibid). Segal continues to explain that if the object is confused with the ego, then the symbol, a product of the ego, will subsequently become undifferentiated from the thing symbolized. Hence, if we take into consideration, once more, the example given earlier of art materials, they could not be used by an individual who may unconsciously wish to symbolically represent faeces, since as concrete symbols, these substances lose their own properties and are felt to be faeces (Segal, H., 1957). In such instances, for children or adults who are prone to reverting to more primitive modes of functioning, this type of concrete symbolization may lead to an escalation of impulsive smearing and messing with the art materials, that if not contained by external limits, will intensify their anxiety and advance their immersion into Dionysian excess.

#### 4.5 Paradox, Ambivalence and the Therapeutic Space

In this chapter, I have attempted thus far, to show how within the liminal space of art, the boundaries between illusion and reality, madness and creativity and imagination and intoxication are not always distinct (Segal, C., 1982). The tensions arising from these paradoxes that constitute aesthetic experience, also parallel those found in the liminal space of the therapeutic frame that, on the one hand, attempts to elicit phantasy, while on the other, demands that reality be observed (Savitz, 1990).

An analogy can also be drawn between the frame or structure of this therapeutic space and the Dionysian proscenium, a stage unto which was projected the inner world of objects, emotions and impulses that then took on a life of their own. The therapist, in the transference situation, can similarly be viewed as the "container", "mirror" or "blank screen" on to which a myriad of feelings, phantasies and thought processes can be projected (Savitz, 1990, p. 43). However, the tension arising from the conflictual nature of extreme opposites that co-exist and are integral to the liminal space of art, the therapeutic alliance and within the internal world of the individual, must be tolerated if this delimited space is to survive. Charles Segal, in his investigation of the paradoxical nature of the Dionysian in The Bacchae, referred to this dilemma as, "how to bring into the bounded realm of form this principle that dissolves boundaries, how to make Dionysos live within the civic and aesthetic confines of city, theater and festival without annihilating that space" (1982, p. 16). The resolution to this paradox, which is the essence of the god Dionysos, is therefore, that there can be no resolution (ibid). The crossings, doublings and contrarities of love and hate, fear and ecstasy, annihilation and creativity that arise within this "liminal" space cannot be resolved but only tolerated. By reason of this paradox, it may be said that the ability to tolerate ambivalence itself is that undefinable fine line which divides the conflicting thought-processes, feeling states and impulses personified by Apollo and Dionysos.

From a Kleinian perspective, the tolerance of ambivalence is only possible with the advent of the depressive position, where rather than splitting the object into ideal or persecutory parts, it is seen as whole and separate. As such, the object is experienced as both loved and hated, gentle and horrifying, ugly and beautiful.

Within the therapeutic alliance, the ability to tolerate ambivalence can be encouraged with the establishment of trust and good feeling towards external object that, in turn, leads to a heightened concern for its survival and restorative phantasies (Klein, 1975b, p. 347). The ability to tolerate ambivalence can therefore be seen as a fundamental determinant in artistic creation and the artist, having been most exposed to the extremes of this liminal realm, can give form to its beauty and horror in symbols and images (Segal, C., 1982). These Apollonian symbolic representations that "shine" with the gods radiance are consequently living proof that "there are no beautiful surfaces without terrible depths" (Nietzsche, as cited by Sallis, 1991, p. 37).

Even the ancient Greeks, with their unequivocal reverence for beauty, recognized their Apollonian art, civilization and individual consciousness sprung from the depths of the abysmal. It followed that the Mad god, Dionysos, who embodied all that was barbaric, chaotic and therefore, ugly in nature, was accepted into their pantheon and was even depicted side by side with Apollo on the pediment of his temple in Delphi. The pathological, chaotic and primitive were not excessively denied in this culture but were instead viewed as intrinsic parts of the natural world. Rather, it was the forced discrimination of these phenomena from nature, as may occur when one's perception is rooted in a purely Apollonian consciousness that the Greek's considered deviant and abominable. This all-encompassing vision that led to their aesthetic and cultural development is most clearly explained in the following passage from Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy (1871) that I will end this chapter with by citing in its entirety:

The reader may intuit these effects if he has ever, even though only in a dream, been carried back to the ancient Hellenic way of life. Walking beneath high Ionic peristyles, looking toward a horizon

defined by pure and noble lines, seeing on either hand the glorified reflections of his shape in gleaming marble and all about him men moving solemnly or delicately, with harmonious sounds and rhythmic gestures: would he not then, overwhelmed by this steady stream of beauty, be forced to raise his hands to Apollo and call out: "Blessed Greeks! How great must be your Dionysos, if the Delic god thinks such enchantments necessary to cure you of your dithyrambic madness!" To one so moved, an ancient Athenian with the august countenance of Aeschylus might reply: "But you should add, extraordinary stranger, what suffering must this race have endured in order to achieve such beauty! Now come with me to the tragedy and let us sacrifice in the temple of both gods. (Nietzsche, 1871, as translated by Francis Golfing, 1956, p. 146)

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

In this closing section, I will recapitulate some of the principal discussions that were brought forth in this investigation of the dialectic between the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies as they relate to aesthetic experience, creative expression and the development of the individual. A re-examination of the primary and subsidiary statements will follow, with particular emphasis on the relevance and implications of these two tendencies in the discipline of art therapy. It is anticipated that with this summary, further theoretical and practical applications of this framework will be disclosed which, although may not be fully developed here, can be considered for future study.

I will, therefore, begin by restating the various internal processes, ego states and artistic forces that the two deities have come to symbolically represent throughout this work. For example, in metapsychological terms, the symbolic roles of Apollo and Dionysos in ancient Greek literature, myth and cult, were examined in conjunction with Melanie Klein's relational-structural model. From this structural model perspective, the excessive mysticism of chthonic Dionysian beliefs and cults were viewed as originating from a weak, unintegrated ego and a harsh, pre-oedipal super-ego, which both have the tendency to blur subject and object.

Confusional states resulting from the primitive phantasies, mechanisms and aims of these two psychic structures were, in turn, compared with the *ekstasis* or *mania* that the votaries of Dionysos underwent when they communed with the god. Rapturous fusion states, whereby Dionysos entered and took possession of his



devotees, resulted in a temporary loss of self and an exceeding of the limits that circumscribe the individual. As such, the Dionysian represents the most primitive constituents of the psyche and concomitant functions (Roberts, 1975).

Conversely, the Apollonian tendency, from a structural perspective, can be regarded as stemming from a more integrated ego with differentiated boundaries and a milder super-ego, with a moral character. Apollo, who was in opposition to Dionysian proliferation and enveloping states, was also the divine authority of contemplative distance, temperance and the observation of limit (Guthrie, 1955). He therefore, symbolically typifies the strengthened ego's ability to discern and test reality which is a precondition for all sublimations and restorative trends.

At this point, it is important to reiterate that although the various processes and states mentioned thus far, have been presented, for the purpose of exposition, as antithetical, they are by no means sharply distinguishable, but are instead, interactive on all levels. Accordingly, from a structural perspective, there exists a perpetual oscillation, back and forth, between integration and dissolution, fusion and separateness, primitive and civilized, which shapes the individual and their perception of reality (Rose, 1980).

With regard to genetic continuity, from an object-relations viewpoint, we have examined Klein's developmental positions in early infancy in conjunction with the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies. Within this framework, Dionysian excess was linked to the proliferation of primitive impulses, conflicts and regressive phantasies that arise in the paranoid schizoid position. The Apollonian, on the other hand, shows a greater affinity with the depressive position since this personifies an increased awareness of reality, moderation and a more

advanced ethical sense analogous to the feelings of pity, guilt and remorse, that lie at the root of restorative phantasies (Klein, 1975c). Once again, it is the fluctuating movement of the ego, between these two phases of development in relation to its objects, that has been associated with the ongoing progressions and reversions of Apollonian and Dionysian.

The creative process and aesthetic form mirror an ego which exists in this liminal, intermediate space (Rose, 1980). The Dionysian, as an artistic impulse, represents the unrestrained discharge of creative and destructive energies that are channeled into a work of art and are reflected in its form and content. In addition, the Dionysian is the ecstatic transgression and dissolution of the boundaries that delimit the self which the artist undergoes when he is immersed in the creative process (Sallis, 1991).

The paradoxical nature of Dionysos becomes manifest in his variegated masks and epiphanies, which embody both the ugly and barbarous, as well as the beautiful and gentle. These interactive qualities also co-exist within the liminal space of art and constitute its aesthetically gratifying and "eternal" aspects (Rickman, 1940, p. 307).

The Apollonian artistic impulse, consists of contemplative distance and the sublimation of instinctual impulses that can only result with the advent of the depressive position. The Apollonian has also been regarded in terms of "distancing images" which contain, make manifest and tame Dionysian excess and therefore mediate between the internal and external worlds (Sallis, 1991, p. 27). These balanced and harmonious forms that shine with the gods' radiance, allow the artist to symbolically share his experiences of past and present, illusion and

reality, life and death and thus, provide him with a safe passage between the two realms (Sallis, 1991).

Each of the aforementioned processes, states and impulses, whether they are grounded in a structural, genetic or aesthetic framework, have been alluded to in and throughout this study as Apollonian and Dionysian. These dialectical tendencies also conjoin and interact within the bounded, paradoxical space of the therapeutic session that on the one hand, elicits phantasy, while on the other, demands that reality be observed (Savitz, 1990).

The formation of this therapeutic frame was examined through the exposition of clinical data in light of the dynamics of the latency period. The main premise that was focused upon in the course of this survey of clinical material, was the relationship that exists between the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies and the "adjustment" of the ego and super-ego that occurs only in this post-oedipal period due to a strengthening of the ego (Klein, 1975c, p. 180). The reconciliation of these two structures towards the mutual aim of suppressing id impulses and adapting to the demands of real objects, is comparable to a similar adjustment that occurred in ancient Greece during the fifth century (Stokes, 1958). This alignment is reflected in the harmony and balance of lyrical poetry, the sublimation of unconscious phantasy in Olympian myths, and the beauty of classical form, all of which are epitomized in the Apollonian (ibid). These developments in ancient Greece were due to the advancement of a greater reality sense in that culture similar to that arising in latency, which subsequently increased sublimation and mitigated excessive manic processes (ibid).

In the presentation of clinical data, I attempted to show how, through non-

verbal sensory communication and the establishment of a therapeutic alliance, this adjustment between the ego and super-ego and hence, sublimation and the mastery of anxiety, were encouraged with a latency aged boy whose escalating aggression and inhibited ability to communicate verbally, made him unresponsive to other forms of intervention provided by the hospital's multi-disciplinary team. The reason that this adjustment, which can occur only in latency and is also sometimes regarded as the "successful outcome" of therapeutic treatment was promoted by the therapeutic alliance, was that the therapist served as a representative of the super-ego in the outside world, thus supporting its prohibitions and diminishing the harsh, unrealistic demands of phantastic imagos (Klein, 1975c). It is my belief that an adjustment of this kind was beginning to develop with my client since, over time, he began to display more control over instinctual impulses and the mitigation of obsessional defenses. In short, the presentation showed the progressive movements of the boy's ego from the Dionysian, with its primitive excesses and pre-oedipal conflicts, to the more moderate, genital trends of the Apollonian..

Subsidiary statements that were also addressed in this review of clinical data, included whether the art produced during latency was under the influence of either the Apollonian or Dionysian tendencies. In addition, an attempt was made to determine if the tendencies could be identified through a theoretical discussion of the form and content of art work, the client's verbal associations, and the use of various media.

Some of the factors considered, in light of these inquiries, were the mechanisms of defense, or Dionysian 'masks', that arose from early anxiety situations and were used by the client to suppress feelings of guilt and depression. These primitive mechanisms became apparent by his limited ability to verbalize

and his guarded attitude: his impulsive lack of control with art materials; as well as a resistance to explore various themes arising from phantasy and his real environment.

Over time, gradual changes were observed in his personality that were also mirrored in the art work and process. For example, his involvement in sublimation activities increased and he showed a marked improvement in his communication skills. This advancement of symbolization and restorative trends served as a bridge between his internal and external world and consequently assisted him in mastering anxiety.

The client's artistic representations and the clinical data were then examined with regard to their symbolic value. Apollonian real symbols and Dionysian concrete symbols, as were made manifest in his play activities, constructive and destructive tendencies and artistic productions, were viewed as a means of identifying Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies within an art therapeutic framework. Once again, it was brought to the attention of the reader that although these symbolic representations were observed, documented and presented within the context of art therapy, as stemming from opposing tendencies, due to the ongoing interplay between the Apollonian and Dionysian, it is essential that they be regarded as coexisting within intra-psychic experience.

Finally, I would like to conclude by stating that the formulations on sublimation, ego development and creative expression in light of Apollonian/Dionysian tendencies, were investigated in the hope of expanding upon current theoretical perspectives in art therapy and thus provide therapists with a deeper understanding of their clinical impressions relating to interpersonal and

intra-psychic dynamics. It is also anticipated that some of the immediate issues surrounding this subject were reviewed sufficiently herein, and that further related areas of study have been revealed for expansion upon the theoretical and practical applications of this framework in the discipline of art therapy.

For example, what are the implications of the Apollonian and Dionysian model/framework in cultural terms, where variant social mores, conduct and prevailing beliefs could re-define the Apollonian bounds that shape our Western society and the individual and thus, alter the processes and tendencies that constitute the Apollonian and Dionysian? Another question that arises, from a clinical perspective, is whether these two tendencies, that were examined with regard to the dyadic relationship between client and therapist, can also be used in exploring interpersonal group dynamics or family systems. And finally, can the functional and theoretical applications of this framework that were rooted in a psycho-analytic model, be viewed in conjunction with other theoretical models such as behavioural, humanistic or existential?

These and other questions, concerning the dualities, doublings and crossings embodied in the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies, which cannot be addressed at present, remain to be expanded upon. For anyone interested, as I was, in pursuing this quest through history, myth and magic, this subject opens up diverse and unexplored areas of study that can contribute not only to existing literature and theories in the discipline of art therapy, but also to other fields of study such as, the philosophy of aesthetics, humanities, sociology, and the historical development of Western civilization and thought. The multifariousness of the Apollonian/Dionysian continuum, epitomizes such varied qualities as ambiguity and clarity, restraint and freedom, creativity and destructiveness and

moderation and excess, tendencies which relate to and embody every level of human experience.

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APPENDIX 1

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