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THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE THERAPEUTIC
ASPECT OF ART-MAKING IN ART THERAPY FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF CREATIVITY

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A Thesis
in
The Department
of
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Murielle Laramée, 1988

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ABSTRACT

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE THERAPEUTIC ASPECT OF ART-MAKING IN ART THERAPY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CREATIVITY

Murielle Laramee

Art therapy involves the mingling of both art and of psychoanalytic disciplines.

This thesis examines the role and the function art may take in art therapy when creativity is given central importance.

In the actual process of creating something, conflicts are experienced and inner feelings take a form. This process, which has inherent healing properties, has its origin in the mother-infant dyad where innate feelings of love and hate seek integration.

In infancy, the conflict is resolved through creative imagination in playing, a process experienced from birth onwards and best expressed through art.

It is believed that by engaging into art as the infant engaged himself/herself into play, a psychological synthesis of conflicting inner feelings unfolds.

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F O R E W O R D

Art therapy is in itself a nonverbal therapy but demands to a certain extent verbal exchanges between the therapist and the client, varying in accordance with the therapist's theoretical beliefs, approaches and types of population. To speak of art therapy without taking into consideration the relationship between the client and the therapist would be to ignore one of its most fundamental premises.

It could be said that there are as many types of art therapy as there are therapists practicing it. By the nature of the work which requires a unique interrelationship between two persons, each therapeutic relationship is different from any other in as much as each therapist and client alike can be.

However, the function of art-making in the therapeutic situation seems somewhat more difficult to define. It is a subject of much controversy among art therapists. Some use art simply as a means to facilitate the expression of repressed emotions which

then serve only as a basis for interpretation. Many consider the artistic process a symbolic living experience where new attitudes can be "tried out". Others oscillate from one theory to another in order to adapt themselves to the needs of their clients.

The fundamental issue of how the artwork is considered within the therapeutic relationship has to be faced by all art therapists of whatever orientations. My thesis is an attempt to explore my ideas on this issue.

Because I will be trying to abstract a few salient points from a number of writers, i.e., Brown, Segal, Fuller, Rose, Winnicott, Milner and Chasseguet-Smirgel, I will at times resort to direct quotations, recognizing that their way of putting things is as succinct as is possible.

INTRODUCTION

It has long been established that communication between human beings is essential to the individual's well being and his/her adaptation to society. Mental disturbances could result from its failure. Art could have emerged from this need to express and communicate what words cannot convey. Art therapy takes advantage of art for its being a powerful means of communication. But art-making, (the act of creating something) according to many researchers, also possesses curative value.

This thesis postulates that art-making in art therapy represents, aside from its communicative aspect, a major constituent of a therapeutic process.

It will examine the therapeutic potentialities inherent in the experience of creating art and whether or not the art therapist should primarily foster creative undertakings in his/her endeavor to restore the unhealthy personality.

It wishes to emphasize that art therapy offers a unique opportunity for creativity to unfold.

Creativity has long been seen as a fundamental characteristic inherent in human nature. It is a potentiality given to everyone at birth but may be blocked or inhibited as the individual gets encultured. A major premise of many researchers and authors is that creativity is essential for the growth, development and evolution of human beings. In most of their theories, the understanding and recognition of this potential in each individual represents the curative force in modern psychotherapy. What it amounts to is to make fully real one's own uniqueness.

The central question behind much of this research is - what is creativity?

The literature on the subject abounds and many hypotheses have been proposed.

In what is to follow, I shall survey the hypotheses and findings of a few outstanding workers

in the field of psychology applied to the dynamic processes involved in the creative act.

According to Silvano Arieti, the major theories conceived are located within a framework of general psychology and of psychoanalysis. In general psychology, the creative process is viewed as a cycle passing through four phases. First, there is a period of preparation followed by a time of incubation. Then comes the moment of illumination, - the creative person sees the solution to his problem; finally there is the process of revision in which the data is corrected and accepted by the innovator (Arieti, 1976, p. 15).

Arieti believes that although the "generalists" have made great contribution to our understanding of the act of creativity, they have made reference only to general aspects of it.

Psychoanalysts on the other hand, have made deeper inroads into the understanding of the creative process. For the purpose of this study and because of their relevance to art therapy, only the main theories

stemming or deriving from psychoanalysis will be taken into account. My approach which is exploratory, concerns itself with theories only and follows the chronological development of psychoanalysis in the British School. Some aspects developed through psychoanalytic thinking in France will however be included.

CHAPTER I

1. THE THERAPEUTIC ATTRIBUTES OF ART

1.1 ART AND CREATIVITY

How infinitely vast is the subject of both art and creativity. Many researchers have been concerned with the relationship that exists between the two and although sometimes antithetical in their findings, none of them have denied that creativity is a fundamental characteristic inherent in human nature. It is a complex phenomenon that has its roots in all art processes. It is universal. "Wherever there are human beings, there is art..." (Arnheim, 1966, p.337) and therefore creativity.

But creativity does not apply only to art. It applies to other fields of human activities as well. To be creative can be an attitude. But according to Arnheim, not only is there art wherever there are human beings, "...wherever there is art, there are art teachers" (p.337). Creativity can be enhanced and

cultivated through the teaching of art.

This paper does not concern itself with the teaching of art per se but rather is about art therapy. However, a parallel may be drawn at this point in that both fields concur at the unfolding of creativity through the arts. Contrary to what was once believed, art (and/or the aesthetic experience) is not the prerogative of only a few people but is a natural activity of every human being. Art in art education is considered "one of the ways of producing mature, complete and happy people" (Arnheim, 1966, p.337). Keeping this in mind, I shall examine the healing aspects of art-making.

1.2 ART THERAPY, CREATIVITY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Although art therapy bears some similarities with art education, its roots reach back into the psychoanalytic tradition, for example, Freud found in the dreamwork, characteristics which are common to the creative process. In his view both are an expression of the unconscious symbolically represented.

In referring to the similarities between dreams and the creative process, J. Chasseguet-Smirgel (1971) says that in aesthetic creation, it is possible to find some of the processes proper to the unconscious:

...[condensation, déplacement, associations par contiguïté, etc.], mais aussi des procédés pour passer le barrage, autrement infranchissable, de la censure. Dans le cas de la création esthétique, ce barrage est forcé grâce à la sublimation des pulsions qui subissent un changement d'objet et de but, but qui devient socialement accepté, selon Freud, et une modification de la nature de la libido pulsionnelle qui se déssexualise, selon la

conception introduite par Freud en 1923 dans 'Le Moi et le Ca.' (p.34).

According to psychoanalytic theory, dreams have psychological meaning. In sleep, because controls are relaxed, repressed wishes in the unconscious threaten to slip out. The wish which would be unacceptable to the waking ego is disguised in order to pass the censor. This is what makes dreams symbolic. The real material, which Freud calls the latent content and which represents what the dream really means, is transformed into what he calls, the manifest content. The aim of this transformation is to reduce the pressure involved in the conflict experienced by the individual because of moral and social constraints.

The latent or hidden content of dreams can be uncovered in psychoanalysis by the technique of dream interpretation. The analysand free-associates around symbolic representations of the dream until the wish-fulfillment becomes apparent. The process involves the transformation of the primary process thinking into the secondary process, the verbal

thinking of consciousness. The aim is to make conscious the mental activities of which the patient is unaware but none the less, influence his behavior. It is to bring into the open, the repressed dream-wish.

In Freud's view, the characteristics common to both dreams and the creative process reside in the transformation of primary process material (because unacceptable) into a symbolic form. The process involves the sublimation or displacement of sexual energy from its original aim or object. Through the process of sublimation, the artist who cannot find fulfillment in neurotic or perverse sexual gratification will be motivated to create.

In other words, creativity would be the attempt to solve conflicts that originate in human drives. The result would be a symbolic representation, in disguise, of ungratified sexual impulses due to regressive tendencies and/or constraints. The release of repressed emotions associated with that process would produce a cathartic effect, an emotive discharge and therefore an effect of healing.

In art therapy, spontaneously creating images, the individual free-associates with the symbols that emerge from the unconscious which can then be understood by means of verbal interpretation. Important insight is achieved, which produces a cathartic effect, resulting in changes in the personality. The act of creating can then be seen as the transformation of primary process material (because unacceptable) into a formed expression.

Unfortunately, Freud's followers have tended to associate creativity with neurosis. Yet, Freud himself says: "The artist, like the neurotic, [has] withdrawn from an unsatisfying reality into this world of imagination; but unlike the neurotic, he [knows] how to find a way back from it and once more to get firm foothold in reality" (Brian Hasley, 1977, p.100). That is to say, the artist finds, through artistic activity a means to escape from neurosis to sublimation.

Works of art, like dreams, can be seen in terms of manifest content and latent content. They can be

seen as a compromise between the instinctual needs of the artist dictated by the pleasure principle and his/her conscience or superego dictated by the reality principle. Thus, art serves as an acceptable outlet for repressed instinctual energies providing the artist an opportunity to escape neurosis. Freud describes the artist as:

an introvert, not far removed from neurosis.... he desires to win honour, power, wealth, fame and the love of women; but he lacks the means for achieving these satisfactions. Consequently, like any other unsatisfied man, he turns away from reality and transfers all his interest and his libido too, to the wishful constructions of his life in phantasy, whence the path might lead to neurosis. (Brian Hasley, 1977, p.100)

The divergence of opinion about neurosis and sublimation that still pervades the field of art therapy stems from the perhaps misunderstood writings of Freud.

For example, Freud's view of creativity and its

proximity to neurotic states of mind has been widely criticized. Arieti (1976) makes the following observation:

It is apparent that Freud was almost exclusively concerned with the importance and relevance of motivation in creativity and not with the essence of creativity itself. Motivation, conscious or unconscious, is indeed very important, but it is difficult to accept the idea that the whole phenomenon of creativity can be reduced to a motivational mechanism. Practically all human behavior is motivated, but only a small part of it can be called creative.... Is the creative person's discontent only a disguise for lack of sexual gratification? (p.23).

However, I should point to those defenders of Freud who argue that his ideas are misunderstood because they have been mistranslated (Bettelheim, 1983) or because they have been misrepresented (Wollheim, 1973). Wollheim argues that Freud is explicit about the fact that artistic creativity is incompatible with neurosis.

Of course the pioneering movements in art therapy in the U.S.A. were Freudian and the issue is the extent to which the full potential of art therapy resides in the making of pictures only, in the primary process image-making, balanced against those psychoanalytic techniques, which bring images to the secondary process thinking by verbalization until the symbolic representation is understood.

Margaret Naumberg, a pioneer in the field, uses art as a vehicle for psychotherapy. Although art therapy, according to her, "bases its methods on releasing the unconscious by means of spontaneous art expression; it has its roots in the transference relation between patient and therapist and on the encouragement of free-association" (Ulman, 1975, p.4), the emphasis is on those psychoanalytic techniques which facilitate verbalization.

Edith Kramer, (1971) another pioneer in the field, emphasizes the healing aspect of the creative act. She says: "art therapy is seen as distinct from psychotherapy. Its healing potentialities depend on

the psychological process that are activated in the creative work" (p.25). For her, the act of creating is an "act of integration and synthesis, which is performed by the ego" (Elaine & Bernard Feder, 1981, p.74).

The full potential of art therapy, according to Kramer, can be understood on the basis of this process, "...wherein drive energy is deflected from its original goal and displaced onto achievement, which is highly valued by the ego, and is, in most instances socially productive" (Kramer, 1971, p.68).

Obviously, according to the above quote, Kramer bases her method on the concept of sublimation which, according to her "constitutes one of the most efficient means of dealing with dangers threatening from the drives and of making constructive use of their potentially destructive power" (Kramer, 1971, p 68).

In other words, art would allow destructive feelings to be expressed in a harmless way and reinvested constructively. According to Freud, this

represents the artist's motivation to create.

Fostering creative undertakings in art therapy would help, if such is the case.

Carl G. Jung approaches the understanding of human psyche from a totally different standpoint. In criticizing Freud, he writes:

To my way of thinking, (Freud's school) deserve(s) reproach for over-emphasizing the pathological aspect of life and for interpreting man too exclusively in the light of his defects.... For my part, I prefer to look at man in the light of what in him is healthy and sound. (Jung, 1933, p.117)

Notwithstanding the importance of sexuality (emphasized by Freud) in psychic life, he holds that human beings have spiritual needs as well, seeing sexuality as only one of the life-instincts.

Jung's approach to the creative process is implicit in his conception of the human psyche and I

shall investigate the implications that his views of the psyche have had for art and creativity and, therefore for art therapy.

1.3 ART THERAPY, CREATIVITY AND ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Jung's view of creativity is very much interrelated with an important aspect of his psychology: his interpretation of the nature of the symbol, which functions to protect the individual from a loss of equilibrium. Morris Philipson (1963) who has made an examination of Jung's writings in relation to creativity and aesthetics, writes: "The necessity to pursue 'wholeness' consciously is a consequence of experiencing the opposite of 'wholeness' - disintegration." And the most crucial attacks against the sense of being integrated come from manifestations of the unconscious" (p. 8-9).

It is to be noted at this point that Jung's interpretation of unconscious and conscious factors differs from Freud's in that neither is seen as superior to the other.

Wholeness is achieved through "an interpretation of the internal relationships between the conscious and unconscious factors in which the proper roles of both are accurately conceived" (Philipson, 1963, p.8).

According to Jung, each crisis in one's life that marks the transition from one stage to another, is resolved in the creation of symbols. This has the effect of liberation, the effect of healing. This is for Jung, where creativity lies, and is that which manifests itself in the realms of art, religion, philosophy, science. Jung views the symbol forming activity as a means to achieve wholeness, which process he calls, the process of individuation; the process which serves to achieve one's own best self. To clarify Jung's interpretation of the purpose for which images come into being, Philipson (1963) writes:

When this (manifestation of the unconscious) is experienced, for example, in dreams, visions or fantasies which attack a given state of wholeness, the content of such manifestations is perceived as an image, and the effort to incorporate it into the ongoing conscious process may go through the following states: expression in symbolic language; the attempt to reduce the direct experience to a rational sequence, giving personal and impersonal origins; and the hope of

assimilating the experience to the now revised whole of the personality. (p.9)

In other words, the creation of images with symbolic value is a means to transform and assimilate the contents of the unconscious for the well-being of the psyche as a whole. It satisfies the need for wholeness. The inability to transform eruptions from the unconscious into a symbol will leave the person defenseless against the unconscious, leading to psychosis. On the other hand, to completely block off eruptions from the unconscious is no solution either. An over-defended psyche would lead to barrenness; "...rigid order from which meaningfulness has disappeared" (Philipson, 1963, p.10). The whole process is concerned with the human being's need to give meaning to life.

Criteria which appear to be essential to creativity would be an openness and receptiveness to manifestations of the unconscious; lack of it would result in sclerosis of the psyche. But an "immediate experience without order - the psyche without defense", would result into chaos. "Adaptation to the

claims of the outer world is no more desirable, pure and simple, than adaptation to the claims of the innerworld. What is desirable is that 'middle path' which reconciles the two" (Philipson, 1963, p.43).

When this middle path is reached, the symbol is born which came to be called the reconciling or unifying symbol with a transcendent or synthesizing function of opposed conscious and unconscious factors. The process is designated as productive. Inherently, the process involves a change, a transformation of the personality. This process is viewed as a fundamental phenomenon of existence.

But Jung warns us to separate the personal from the collective. This is crucial to the understanding of his psychology. The contents of the personal unconscious, (corresponding to Freud's concept of the unconscious) would contain those elements of the personality that have been repressed, the complexes, but could be made conscious by reductive analysis. At the same time, the collective unconscious contains all the material that has "not yet reached the threshold of consciousness" (Philipson, 1963, p.48).

Symbol-forming activity relates to the collective unconscious.

Philipson reports that Jung has found that even after repressed contents have been made conscious and integrated into a patient's conscious life, "the conscious...persists no less than before in its creative activity" (p.48).

The analytical psychologist, Eric Neumann writes:

However, the complexes of the personal unconscious may sometimes serve to release a creative achievement and not to a neurosis, the personality has succeeded spontaneously or reactively in going beyond the 'merely personal and familiar' element in the complex to attain a collective significance, i.e. to become creative. (1975, p.157).

Thus, the creative principle may sometimes encompass personal factors but has its correspondence in the collective unconscious. Neumann (1975) further writes: "The creative impulse springs from the

collective; like every instinct it serves the will of the species and not of the individual" (p.98).

It is through symbolism that the contents of the collective unconscious can be perceived by the conscious mind. Jung refers to various constructs of the contents of the collective unconscious as archetypes.

On the nature of archetypes, Jolande Jacobi (1974) writes: "It is impossible to give an exact definition of the archetype, and the best we can hope to do is to suggest its general implications by 'talking around' it" (p.31).

She states that:

In line with Freudian theory, the whole unconscious is taken as a mere 'reservoir of repressions.' But the collective unconscious is not made up of individual experience; it is an inner correspondence to the world as a whole. What is (sometimes) overlooked is that the collective unconscious is of an entirely

different nature, comprising all the contents of the psychic experience of mankind... and it is also overlooked that the collective unconscious is in every respect 'neutral', that its contents acquire their value and position only through confrontation with consciousness. (p.60)

The archetype as such is in itself nonperceptible and invisible. One can never encounter it directly, but indirectly when it is manifested in the archetypal image, that is in a symbol.

As explained previously, the function of the symbol is one of reconciling the unconscious with the conscious. It is when a distressing situation arises in an individual that archetypal material is activated. Neumann speaks of tension between ego and unconscious. He says: "Only if this tension is endured- and this always calls forth a state of suffering- can a third term be born, which 'transcends', or surpasses, the opposites and so combines parts of both positions into an unknown, new creation" (1975, p.192).

The form it takes is the result of the unity between the unconscious and the conscious. In other words, rigidity and chaos (Philipson's terms to describe an over-defended psyche and its opposite, a psyche without defense) are joined together in forms which are significant for the collectivity but at the same time represent developmental phases for the individual. This unity represents, according to Jung, the essence of the creative process.

Form can exist even though nothing is created in the world of things. It can be referred to the capacity of opening oneself, of integrating oneself, of organizing one own's life and giving it meaning. To give form to opposite tendencies can be referred to as an attitude towards life.

Jung's system of psychotherapy aims to bring the patient into contact with the collective unconscious through interpretation of symbols contained in dreams or artistic expression, thereby causing him/her to understand his/her problems more clearly. The personal knowledge derived from such interpretations offers some insight into how he/she ought to become.

To some extent, this method bears some similarities to the technique used by Naumberg, a relation that is not surprising in that she had some Jungian analysis (Rubin, 1984). Similarly, the reason for the creation of the symbol itself bears some similarities with that put forward by Kramer.

Jung's ideas on creativity are complex and to elaborate any further is beyond the scope of this study. The major implication that his views have had on art therapy lies in his interpretation on the nature of the symbol and of its relation to form.

In the next chapter, the relation that exists between form, creativity and health shall be examined, via another trajectory in the development of psychoanalysis; the Kleinian tradition.

CHAPTER II

2. ART THERAPY, CREATIVITY AND THE POST-KLEINIANS

2.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POST-KLEINIAN SCHOOL

Although Melanie Klein's theories resemble those of the classical ones, they differ in that greater importance is given to the first year of life rather than to childhood as a whole. She holds that there is more in the infant's relation to its mother than the satisfaction of physiological needs: consequently, displacing the classical Oedipal complex, is the decisive developmental event.

The infant, she believes, has a vivid phantasy life which includes a wide range of sexual and aggressive impulses. Classical analysis, according to her, fails to deal with aggression in its most primitive form and the struggle encountered by the infant to resolve the problems associated with it.

Klein's ideas come into focus when contrasted with those of Anna Freud. The psychoanalytic approach used by Anna Freud in the treatment of children could not, according to her, be applied to those who were still under six years old. The methods of Anna Freud corresponded to those used in adult psychoanalysis and as such require that the child be old enough to cooperate by expressing himself verbally.

In contrast, Melanie Klein invented a technique of analyzing the free-association play of children. Her work has greatly contributed in developing new insights into the earliest years of the child's life and even into the earliest months of life.

In the earliest months two physical processes are of dominant importance - taking in and giving out. Milk from the mother's breast is taken in by the mouth and following the process of digestion faeces are given out. It seems likely that the child's earliest mental states are based on these biological facts, so that what he takes in or gets rid of in his imagination plays an important part in forming his concepts of himself

and the surrounding world. Psychologically speaking, the process of taking in is what is described as "introjection" and that of giving out is "projection". (Brown, 1961, p.74)

As Charles Rycroft (1968) puts it, introjection is "the process by which the functions of an EXTERNAL OBJECT are taken over by its mental REPRESENTATION, by which the relationship with an object "out there" is replaced by one with an imagined object "inside" (p.77).

Projection on the other hand is the process "by which specific IMPULSES, wishes, aspects of the SELF, or INTERNAL objects are imagined to be located in some OBJECT external to oneself" (Rycroft, 1968 p. 125-126).

Melanie Klein's theories are rather complex and I do not wish to give them full account here. For the purpose of this study and for a better understanding of our subject later, I will however briefly discuss her main thesis. She postulates that at the pre-oedipal stages, there are two phases of

development which she calls positions, to emphasize the fact that the phenomenon she is describing "implies a specific configuration of object relations, anxieties and defences which persist throughout life" (Segal, 1964, p.xiii).

She calls the first position, the paranoid-schizoid position which occupies the first three to four months of life and which is characterized by "the infant's unawareness of 'persons', his relationships being to part objects, and by the prevalence of splitting processes and paranoid anxiety" (Segal, 1964, p.xii).

Essentially, in this position, the representation of the breast is seen by the infant as being good or bad. The mother is not yet seen as a whole object but only as of parts: the breast, hands, holding arms. In this position, the infant is not fully aware of itself.

Hanna Segal (1964) reports that for this position to yield gradually and in a relatively undisturbed way to the next step of development, there must be a

predominance of good experiences over bad ones. Only then, do splitting and projection decrease, leading towards gradual integration and to the new phase of development, the depressive position.

This position occupies the second half of the first year of life and its beginning is "marked by the recognition of the mother as a whole object and is characterized by a relationship to whole objects and by a prevalence of integration, ambivalence and depressive anxiety and guilt" (Segal, 1964, p.xii-xiii).

During this position, the infant learns to accept ambivalence. It learns that the good and the bad are both aspects of the same whole object that he both loves and hates. To quote Hanna Segal again:

When we speak of the infant recognizing his mother as a whole object, we contrast this with both part-object relationships and split-object relationships; the infant, that is to say, relates himself more and more, not only to the mother's breast, hands, face, eyes, as separate

objects, but to herself as a whole person who can be at times good, at times bad, present or absent, and who can be both loved and hated.....The infant discovers his helplessness, his utter dependence on her, and his jealousy of other people. (1964, p.55)

This experience of helplessness, dependence and jealousy, gives rise to reparative wishes; the desire to re-create, reconstruct and regain what has been destroyed through the subject's own hate and aggression.

It is during this process called the reparative process that the basis for creativity sets in. Hanna Segal writes: "The pain of mourning experienced in the depressive position, and the reparative drives developed to restore the loved internal and external objects are the basis of creativity and sublimation." (1968, p.62)

Melanie Klein's theories were an advance on Freud's in that she gave a centrality to the infant's early relationship to the degree that the infant very

soon begins to love its mother in the sense of feeling something for her.

Peter Fuller (1980) who has written on psychoanalysis and its relevance to aesthetics, explains:

In her system the course and character of this relationship is determined not so much by the quality of the mothering which the child receives as by the way in which the child plays out its innate, instinctual ambivalence...Klein was concerned with what she took to be the working out of an instinctual opposition between love and hate, which was not greatly affected by the nature of the environment. (p.159-160)

Not only were Klein's theories considered an advance on Freud's but paved the way for a great deal of research into the effects this very first relationship has on the life of every human being. According to Peter Fuller, a decisive step in psychoanalysis occurred with the replacement of Melanie Klein's dual instinct theory by a full

object-relations theory, "by a theory in which the subject's need to relate to objects plays a central part" (Fuller, 1980, p.160).

John Bowlby (1981) who has (amongst others, i.e. Winnicott, Fairbain) contributed to the development of object-relations theory, writes, as an ending to his monumental research on "Attachment and Loss":

Intimate attachment to other human beings are the hub around which a person's life revolves, not only when he is an infant or a toddler or a schoolchild but throughout his adolescence and his years of maturity as well, and on into old age. From these intimate attachments a person draws his strength and enjoyment of life and, through what he contributes, he gives strength and enjoyment to others. These are matters about which current science and traditional wisdom are at one.

We may therefore hope that, despite all its deficiencies, our present knowledge may be sound enough to guide us in our effort to help those

already beset by difficulties and above all to prevent others becoming so. (p.442)

The post-Kleinian tradition "represents the most constructive development within psychoanalysis, and that which, incidentally, has the most to tell us about the nature of creativity, visual experience and their enjoyment" (Fuller, 1980, p.163).

According to this tradition, personal identity or ego development is attained through a dynamic relationship between the individual and his/her environment, which is first experienced in the mother-infant dyad and from which all future patterns are believed to be built. This first relationship is more closely allied to affection than it is to instincts.

An investigation of this notion follows.

2.2 CREATIVITY AND THE SEPARATION/INDIVIDUATION PROCESS AS DEVELOPED BY POST-KLEINIANS

Although varying slightly in their approaches, the Kleinians regarded ego-development as being based primarily on introjection of the mother and/or breast (Rycroft, 1968, p.80). In general their object relations theory attempted to demonstrate that personal identity or the self is attained through a progressive development from an undifferentiated or egoless state to self-realization and self-actualization. It is believed that the process, which involves a continuous reshaping of the internal self-image with the external world, is first experienced in early childhood within the mother-infant dyad.

Starting with the trauma of birth, every human being is bound to experience problems of separation and is obliged to resolve them. The whole process has to do with moving from dependence towards independence. It is characterized by ambivalent feelings about mergence and separation.

According to post-Kleinians, children in the earliest weeks of life, feel at one with their mother. At that stage they are unaware of themselves as a separate, autonomous human being. Gradually and progressively, under good enough conditions, they become aware of their environment, first of their mother and then, of the fact that they have a separate identity. This process of discovery is considered vital for the growth of every individual and for the establishment of an autonomous self.

In "The Power of Form", Gilbert J. Rose, (1980) a writer on psychoanalysis and aesthetics, says:-

The creative impulse and the growth of self both arise from the early undifferentiated phase of psychological development when there is a sense of coalescence between the child and all that is. The sense of self grows out of the primary unity of mother-child. The boundaries between them are hazy with constant re-emerging taking place. The infant encounters satisfaction, disappointment; they repeat. Slowly, bit by bit, forms emerge

and acquire meanings. Mother takes on a shape, a form distinct from oneself, and with this comes the idea of one's separateness in the world. It is from this pool of early fluid boundaries of self and reality that each of us draws to 'create' our own identity and construct viable forms of reality for ourselves. In this sense through the ego's coordination of psychological growth processes, each of us is involved in a garden-variety of creativity, a self-creation.

(p.91)

This initial blurring stimulates the creative impulse, that is the need for forms, form in its abstract sense which refers to structure, organization or in line with Jung's thoughts, which refer to the capacity of opening oneself, of integrating oneself, of organizing one's own life.

According to post-Kleinians, the need for form arising from an equivalent need for fusion with the environment echoes the original narcissistic fusion of self with mother and the first experiences of self as a separate identity. This search for one's own

identity and at the same time of feeling at one with the universe, echoes the search for and simultaneous avoidance of mother's intimacy.

It is a process of interaction that persists throughout life, continuously aiming at self-realization and self-actualization. It is rooted in our biological nature.

These moments of experiencing self and outer reality, first lived in the mother-infant relationship, is seen by D.W. Winnicott as a "third part of the life of every human being, an intermediate area of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute" (1971, p.3).

It is an area of transition from one stage to another in order to adapt to everyday life. The transitional process as put forward by Winnicott, places imagination in relation to early development and the transitional object. "The child's 'comfort blanket' and other such transitional objects serve as temporary bridges between the familiarity of the self and mother, on the one hand, and the strangeness of

the rest of the world, on the other" (Rose, 1980, p.112).

What follows, is an examination of creativity in relation to the concept of the transitional object and the idea of imagination evolving from an intermediate area of experiencing between self and reality in relation to creativity.

2.3 THE POTENTIAL SPACE AND THE SOURCE OF CREATIVITY

One of the main aspect of Winnicott's thesis is the relationship that exists between playing and creativity. It is only in playing that one is free to be creative and it is only in being creative that one discovers the self. Playing according to Winnicott has a location, the location of cultural experiences. He describes it as follows:

The important part of this concept is that whereas inner psychic reality has a kind of location in the mind or in the belly or in the head or somewhere within the bounds of the individual's personality, and whereas what is called external reality is located outside those bounds, playing and cultural experience can be given a location if one uses the concept of the potential space between the mother and the baby. (Winnicott, 1971, p.62)

The potential space is seen as a world different from the completely subjective and inner world of an individual and the actual world in which he/she lives

and which can be perceived objectively. It is that world which I previously referred to (p.40) as being an intermediate area of experiencing to which, as explained by Winnicott, "inner reality and external life both contribute". It is characterized by ambivalent feelings about mergence and separation and is first experienced when the baby becomes dimly aware of the otherness of the mother and of its own identity. When the infant begins to sense that otherness or the difference between self and not-self phenomena or according to object-relations theory, between himself and the object (mother or part of mother), the ego begins to organize. Peter Fuller explains:

The capacity to explore and investigate this "potential space" in a situation of trust, allows the individual to develop his internal sense of place and integration, his sense of external reality, and his ability to act imaginatively and creatively upon the latter. (1971, p.203)

It may be useful at this point to mention Winnicott's emphasis on the relation that exists

between the experience of the potential space and the presence of a dependable, responsive and caring mother. This, he claims, later becomes the basis of trust and allows for a continuous sense of being, a life that has reality in it. He says:

I have located this important area of experiencing in the potential space between the individual and the environment, that which initially both joins and separates the baby and the mother when the mother's love, displayed or made manifest as human reliability, does in fact give the baby a sense of trust or of confidence in the environmental factor. (Winnicott, 1971, p.121)

It is only in the presence of a caring mother that the baby develops a capacity to be alone which, as he states, "is so nearly synonymous with emotional maturity" (Winnicott, 1965, p.31).

It represents the foundation on which sophisticated aloneness is built; being able to enjoy being alone. He further states:

It is only when alone [that is to say, in the presence of someone] that the infant discovers his own personal life. The pathological alternative is a false life built on reactions to external stimuli. When alone in the sense that I am using the term, and only when alone, the infant is able to do the equivalent of what in an adult would be called relaxing. The infant is able to become unintegrated, to flounder, to be in a state in which there is no orientation, to be able to exist for a time without being either a reactor to an external impingement or an active person with a direction of interest or movement.

(1965, p.34)

As he points out, the state of being alone is paradoxically "something which always implies that someone else is there".

The experience of the potential space is seen as a defensive denial of the separation between the baby and the mother. The infant, through a growing sense of awareness begins to enjoy experiences based on

imaginative denial of separation in a relationship that is to be found reliable. The comfort blanket, and later on, the teddy bear, doll or soft and hard toys to which children become deeply attached, are closely linked with that process. It is through these objects, called by Winnicott, transitional objects, that children explore and oftentimes playfully deny the separation and relationship between themselves and the external world. These objects are symbolical of some part-object, such as the breast and are also symbolical of the union of the baby and the mother. When symbolism is employed, the child is already able to distinguish between inner objects and external objects. "...when we witness an infant's employment of a transitional object, the first not-me possession, we are witnessing both the child's first use of a symbol and the first experience of play" (Winnicott, 1971, p.113).

The use of the transitional object disappears gradually and completely when self and object are differentiated from each other and when the separation from an object no longer threatens a loss of self. While the transitional object disappears, the

transitional process remains and is considered an essential instrument of adaptation.

It is experienced again and again in our search for equilibrium between the inner and outside worlds.

This transitional process corresponds in many respects, to Jung's concept of the symbol whose function is to reconcile the unconscious with the conscious. Rosemary Gordon, who is a Jungian, writes: "The concept of the 'unconscious phantasy', which Melanie Klein developed, and which she defined as the 'mental expression of instinct', is strangely analogous to Jung's concept of the archetype" (1978, p.32).

Although the infant experiences tremendous pleasure associated with play, Winnicott warns us that this type of playing is of a non-organistic kind. It is not founded on the pattern of body functioning but founded on body experiences. He writes:

In the average good experience in this field of management [that starts so early, and that starts

and starts again] the baby finds intense, even agonizing pleasure associated with imaginative play. There is no set game, so everything is creative, and although playing is part of object-relating, whatever happens is personal to the baby. Everything physical is imaginatively elaborated, is invested with a first-time-ever quality. (Winnicott, 1971, p.119)

This type of playing is, according to Winnicott, supplementary to the concept of the sublimation of instinct. It is not related to physical excitement in erotogenic zones, as with masturbation. If it is, according to Winnicott, then the playing stops. It belongs to the interplay in the child's mind of subjective factors and factors that are objectively perceived. "...we leave out something vital if we do not remember that the play of a child is not happy when complicated by bodily excitements with their physical climaxes" (Winnicott, 1965, p.35).

The potential space and that of playing is first experienced in object-relating, that is when the infant becomes aware of the existence of the mother.

It is, so to speak, in the accentuation of this phenomenon that the child, with the help of its mother, will or will not succeed in going on being. According to object-relations theory, in the earliest stages, the child experiences a state of omnipotence and control in the world; a subjective world. This is, according to Melanie Klein, the paranoid-schizoid position. The only thing the infant is aware of is itself.

When an infant becomes aware of its mother, it also realizes its dependence on her. From this comes feelings of wishing to destroy associated with feelings of denial. Melanie Klein refers to this phase of development as the depressive position; it gives rise to reparative wishes; the desire to re-create, reconstruct and regain what has been destroyed through the subject's own hate and aggression. In other words, in this position, once the infant becomes aware of its mother, it realizes its dependence on her which caused it to want to destroy her, to deny that she exists. Feelings of guilt then arise from having wished to destroy her. Consequently, out of guilt, the infant wants to re-create and regain the loved object.

Unconsciously, the child hates its mother for loving it. The unconscious destruction of the object involves the subject (the infant) placing the object outside the area of omnipotent control (which is relative to external reality) and the recognition of the object. It is only after the object has become real or external that the subject may destroy the object. Moreover, the object will survive (if all goes well) the destruction by the subject. Then the subject will be in a position to use the object.

Winnicott (1973) says that:

This destruction becomes the unconscious backcloth for love of a real object; that is, an object outside the area of the subject's omnipotent control...The destructiveness, plus the object's survival of the destruction, places the object outside the area of objects set up by the subject's projective mental mechanisms. In this way a world of shared reality is created which the subject can use and which can feed back other-than-me substance into the subject. (1971 p.111)

It is through this phase that imagination begins for the individual and where the idea of magic originates. "Confidence in the mother makes an intermediate playground here where the idea of magic originates, since the baby does to some extent experience omnipotence" (Winnicott, 1971, p.55). The child starts playing when the loving mother is felt to be reliable and therefore available when remembered after being forgotten. "...according to the infant's growing ability to account for failure of adaptation and to tolerate the results of frustration (Winnicott, 1971, p.13)".

If all goes well, the infant's ability to adapt is achieved through a gradual lessening of mother's own adaptation to the infant's needs. (if all goes well).

The experience of illusion (when mother responds to the infant's needs) allows the infant to believe that there is an external reality that corresponds to its own capacity to create whereas the experience of disillusionment initiates the infant to accept

external reality. The task of reality-acceptance is according to Winnicott never completed or solved. No human being is free from the tension in relating inner and outer reality. However, relief from this tension is provided by an intermediate area of experiencing, that is arts, religion, etc.

The transitional phenomena which belongs to the realm of illusion allows the infant to develop a relationship between itself and the world and therefore to develop a sense of being and a sense of external reality.

Of course, things do not always go well. In referring to the potential space between baby and mother, Winnicott says that: "exploitation of this area leads to a pathological condition in which the individual is cluttered up with persecutory elements of which he has no means of ridding himself" (1971, p.121).

According to object-relations theory, creativity belongs to the individual's approach to external reality, varying in accordance with its very first

experience of it, its first experience of relating to objects.

Creativity is linked, on the one hand, with the need for fusion with the environment (first the mother) and on the other hand, it is linked with the need to differentiate the self from the external world, the need for form, structure and organization. The transitional process is a means to integrate those two fundamental needs.

This integration is the source of aesthetic forming-responding. Peter Fuller writes: "...aesthetic emotion, is involved with this nexus of the submergence of self into the environment, and the differentiation of self out from it" (1980, p.199). Art allows us to accept outer reality by altering what is there outside, and making it closer to our inner reality, in our attempt to reconcile the two.

In what follows, I shall discuss the relationship that exists between art and the potential space.

2.4 THE POTENTIAL SPACE AND ART

This intermediate area of experiencing, unchallenged in respect of its belonging to inner or external [shared] reality, constitutes the greater part of the infant's experience, and throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living, and to creative scientific work. (Winnicott, 1980, p.16)

The idea of transitional phenomena places the primary and the secondary processes on the same time and space continuum, interacting on all levels and aiming at integration. The two processes are complementary rather than opposed. The coexistence of these two basic principles implies that fusion and separation are interactive in an ongoing life process.

The primary process seeks direct gratification and discharge of id impulses originating in human instincts, manifesting a disregard for logic and rationality. It corresponds to the blissful state of

fusion with mother. The secondary process operates with logical thoughts, reality and neutralized energy. It corresponds to separation and the outside world. Creativity would be synonymous with the integration of the two. Inhibitions to creativity are ascribed as fears of returning to an undifferentiated state where self and object become blurred, the result being an overdefended and rigid personality or as Jung put it, a sclerosis of the psyche.

Most people have no clear awareness of their alienation from creative living because of too much compliance vis-à-vis the demands of society or its opposite, not enough compliance.

To this effect, Winnicott (1980) says:

People may be leading satisfactory lives and may do work that is even of exceptional value and yet may be schizoid or schizophrenic. They may be ill in a psychiatric sense because of a weak reality sense. To balance this one would have to state that there are others who are so firmly anchored in objectively perceived reality that

they are ill in the opposite direction of being out of touch with the subjective world and with the creative approach to fact. (p.78)

The transitional process of which the transitional object is an early manifestation, is a means to establish equilibrium between our world and the objective knowledge of reality. It is first experienced in playing (in the sense that Winnicott sees it, which excludes games, a process akin to the concentration of older children and adults) and is related to growth and, as previously discussed, to the development of imagination.

As mentioned earlier, this process which continues throughout life and which aims at self-realization and self-actualization, is perhaps best expressed or reactivated through art. Art corresponds to very early phenomena where, as Winnicott (1980) put it, "the delicacy of what is preverbal, unverballed, and unverbalizable except perhaps in poetry" (p.131) can be relived.

Rose (1965) explains the situation in terms of a

dynamic of the drives, repressed by the ego:

What was one (early fusion state) is now the artist and the work in a narcissistic interaction of rapprochement and detachment, with gradual correction in the light of reality testing and the ego ideal. By making the work serve as a proxy, the artist can vicariously relive the primitive experiments of testing reality by

repeated fusions and separations. The art work is built up and melted down again and again, repeating second-hand the building up, and melting down of psychic structure in its emergence from narcissism. (p.73)

It is to be noted that the artist is not repeating over and over again the same early experience. What is repeated is the process by which each time, something new is created.

Rose further states:

In this way, the artist can give him- or herself up to the art work, sometimes with the intensity

of an addiction, and impress him- or herself upon it in repeated alternations of active mastery and passive surrender, of controlled fusion, letting go and reimposing control, to rediscover depths and limits. The artist resamples the earliest body imagery, perhaps in an unconscious fantasy of fusion and rebirth. The intensity of instinctual forces is reduced, self- and object representations become further refined, more internalization takes place, and, in the process, additional psychic structure is built for further drive neutralization. (p.73)

So art is not a return to infantilism but is rather a renegotiation with self and others, discovering new facets of reality.

Rose refers to Greenacre's 'love-affair with the world' and Buber's 'intercourse with the being of the unknown' which are good examples.

Within the frame of art, the artist permits self boundaries to expand, testing and playing with the boundaries of reality, a process which demands

metaphorically a toleration of the fear of a loss of self. A parallel may be drawn with the toleration or courage of an authentic intimacy with another person's demands, which involves the fear of being totally absorbed by the other, the fear of losing one's autonomy and independence (i.e. the infant's avoidance of mother's intimacy), and in the adult's submission to the sexual desires of the partner.

It is the continuous experiencing of encounter and re-encounter that is the significant happening from the viewpoint of ultimate creativity. Sexual intercourse is the ultimate intimacy of two beings in the fullest and richest encounter possible. It is highly significant that this is the experience that is also the highest form of creativity in the respect that it can produce a new being. (Rollo May, 1975, p.99)

Art and/or creativity stem from the need of the individual to differentiate oneself from others and at the same time to be part of a larger whole. A writer, who writes clearly about the process of creativity in these terms is Joanna Field (Marion Milner).

Furthermore, she has greatly influenced Winnicott in his elaboration of the concept of the potential space. She writes: "To be able to break down the barrier of space between self and other, yet at the same time to be able to maintain it, this seems to be the paradox of creativity" (Field, 1957, p.144).

According to Milner, art offers, in an as-if way, the opportunity of losing and refinding oneself in a wider integration of inner and outer reality, a dynamic which has an effect of replenishment and of enhancing self-esteem. It accommodates both ambiguity and control, sharpens thoughts and feelings and brings a solution to the need for fusion and separation. It implies that work has been done.

Milner (1983) writes about art:

And what I had not known, until the study of the method of the free drawings had forced me to see it, was that ... hate ... is inherent in the fact that we do have to make the distinction between subject and object (p.131).

She adds:

This hate that is inherent in the fact that we do have to make the distinction between subject and object, if we are to develop at all beyond blind instinct, is overcome in a particular way through the arts. It is surely through the arts that we deliberately restore the split and bring subject and object together into a particular kind of new unity. What I had not seen clearly before was that in the arts, although a bit of the outside world is altered, distorted from its "natural" shape, to fit the inner experience, it is still a bit of the outside world, it is still paint or stone or spoken or written words or movements of bodies or sounds of instruments. (p.131)

In trying to alter the outside world to fit the inner, one has to recognize the outside as being real. According to Winnicott, it is only when external reality is accepted that a world of shared reality between the inner and outside world, can be created.

In referring to art and its resonance to our first

relationship with the mother, Milner further states:

It is still a bit of the outside world, but the difference is that work has been done, there has been a labour to make it nearer one's inner conception, not in the way of the practical work of the world, but in an "as if" way. Thus it seemed that the experience of outer and inner coinciding, which we blindly undergo when we fall in love, is consciously brought about in the arts, through the conscious acceptance of the as-if-ness of the experience and the conscious manipulation of a malleable material. So surely it comes about that in the experience which we call the aesthetic one the cause of the primary hate is temporarily transcended. (Field, 1983, p.131)

In trying to re-create what is outside, one may attempt in an as-if way or fantasy, to have it permanently under control, in order to experience omnipotence as is the case with the infant. Creativity stems from the individual's denial of reality. It stems from the primary hate and love of the mother.

Rose extends the argument to include the strengthening of the ego:

It may be suspected that an experience as complex and as gratifying on so many levels must serve a function beyond that of diversion. The congruence between the dialectical structure of aesthetic form and the mind makes art especially suitable to provide the ego with problems on which it can test and perfect its capacities.

(Rose, 1980, p.201)

The idea of the potential space and its relationship to creative imagination remains of the greatest importance in the development of a creative attitude. The art work represents or, rather is a transitional object which serves a function of bridging the familiarity of the self and the strangeness of the rest of the world or, in line with the Kleinian system, which serves the function of transcending the primary hate, a function of restoring and repairing what in the mind has been destroyed.

The concept of art as being the result of these

reparative impulses will be examined in the next chapter.

2.5 ART, A MEANS OF REPAIRING

As discussed earlier, (p.30) at the pre-oedipal stages, Melanie Klein postulates two phases of development, these being the paranoid-schizoid position succeeded by the depressive position.

In the first position, the infant has no awareness of an existing world apart from itself. Its relationship is to part objects (the breast) being good succouring and gratifying or being bad denying and frustrating. The infant usually seeks to introject the good breast, (imagining it is inside) which is a source of well-being and to project the bad breast (imagining it is outside) which it perceives as a persecutor.

"The leading anxiety in the paranoid-schizoid position is that the persecutory object or objects will get inside the ego and overwhelm and annihilate both the ideal object and the self" (Segal, 1964, p.13).

Splitting, which is characteristic of this position relates to an increased idealization of the good object, to keep it apart from the persecutory object. To overcome the anxiety of being annihilated, the ego resorts to a series of mechanisms of defense where projection and introjection are used to keep persecutory and ideal objects as far as possible from each other.

In this position, the infant oscillates between blissful states of fusion with idealized objects and states of hate and persecution when it feels its objects are bad. Its love which is directed to its ideal objects and its hate which is directed to its bad ones refers, in the Kleinian's system, to an inborn polarity of life and death instincts.

Segal writes:

The immature ego of the infant is exposed from birth to the anxiety stirred up by the inborn polarity of instincts - the immediate conflict between the life instinct and the death instinct. It is also immediately exposed to the impact of

external reality, both anxiety-producing, like the trauma of birth, and life-giving, like warmth, love and feeding received from its mother. (1964, p.12)

In other words, both life and death instincts are met with anxiety. She further states:

When faced with the anxiety produced by the death instinct, the ego deflects it. This deflection of the death instinct, described by Freud, in Melanie Klein's view consists partly of a projection, partly of the conversion of the death instinct into aggression. The ego splits itself and projects that part of itself which contains the death instinct outward into the original external object - the breast. Thus, the breast, which is felt to contain a great part of the infant's death instinct, is felt to be bad and threatening to the ego, giving rise to a feeling of persecution. In that way, the original fear of the death instinct is changed into fear of a persecutor. 1964, p.12)

Through studies of case-histories, we may say that fixation points at that stage lead to psychosis, i.e. paranoia and schizophrenia. Splitting may not only occur in terms of the good and the bad object. The fragmentation can also be experienced as multiple.

The intrusion of the death instinct into the breast is often felt as splitting it into many bits, so that the ego is confronted with a multitude of persecutors. Part of the death instinct remaining in the self is converted into aggression and directed against the persecutors. (1964, p.12)

But the ego is not only confronted with persecutors, it is, according to Segal, also confronted with the ideal object. Impulses originating from the life instinct are also projected outward in order to create an object that will correspond to the ego striving for love and the preservation of life. "As with the death instinct, so with the libido. The ego projects part of it outward, and the remainder is used to establish a libidinal relationship to his ideal object" (p.73).

To grow out of this position, Melanie Klein believes that there should be a predominance of good experiences over bad ones. The ego, identifying with the ideal objects, acquires greater strength to cope with anxieties and to integrate the persecutors and ideal objects together.

In the second position, the depressive one, the infant gradually comes to acknowledge that the good and the bad are aspects of the same object, the mother that it both loves and hates. The recognition of the mother as being a whole person implies the recognition that she is living a life of her own. Instead of split objects, good or bad, the infant sees a whole object both good and bad, bringing forth a new anxiety situation. Instead of fearing attacks on the ego by persecutory objects, the infant now fears the loss of that loved object while hating it. The aggressive impulses still operative from the paranoid-schizoid position will be re-experienced but this time with the feeling that the infant has lost the good object through his/her own destructiveness. Intense feelings of loss, guilt and despair arise. The infant feels

hopeless about regaining what has been destroyed.

However, if in the first position enough strength to cope with anxiety has been developed, the infant will, through recognizing that the loss is a consequence of his/her destructive attack, try to regain the loved object by his own love and care. "This experience of total desolation then 'gives rise to reparative impulses- to an overwhelming desire that what has been destroyed must be re-created, reconstructed and regained" (Fuller, 1980, p.115).

It is believed, according to this theory, that the capacity for restoration of the good object, is a fundamental process underlying artistic creativity. In other words, out of destructive impulses, associated with the death instinct, the artist experiences unconscious guilt feelings and therefore the wish to reconcile himself/herself with the world and to become one again; the blissful state of fusion with the universe (first with the mother) which is associated with the life instinct.

It is claimed that out of this process of

reparation and reconstruction, the artist aspires to earn self-respect, which corresponds to the infant's longing for the lost mother.

Rose explains that unconscious remnants of omnipotent feelings from infancy plays an important role in the impulse to be creative.

As the infant develops, the belief that his or her own gestures, sounds and wishes control the world around and continuous with him or her must, perforce, be given up. But not completely or all at once. As it becomes detached from the child's own self, omnipotence becomes attributed to the parents, who seem godlike, even though the child now knows him- or herself to be weak. When the parents, too, are little by little removed from the pedestals where the child's imagination and need placed them, the remnants of the belief in omnipotence are reintroduced into the child's own concept of self, but with a difference. (1980, p.63)

The grandiose notion the child had of himself is

transformed into perfectionistic goals in order to earn self-respect. The above quote by Rose illustrates stages the child, often painfully, has to go through in order to reach maturity. We may say that the artist engaged in the process of making art, has to go through similar stages in order to make peace between himself/herself and others. Self-actualization implies that the process be continuously repeated, as is implicit in the process of growth. To this, Rose further states:

These internalized goals, to which we give the name ego ideal represent a personal standard of perfection. The artist endows his or her work with this ego ideal of perfection. And with the work, the artist woos the world into reinforcing and confirming the original sense of an all-good and all-powerful self before it was humbled in childhood by an increasing awareness of realistic self-limitations. (Rose, 1980, p.64)

Self-esteem is strengthened when the artist meets with success.

If the artist's work is 'successful', i.e., given favorable recognition, it may be worshipped like an icon, while the artist becomes a high-priest or culture hero. Unconscious self-criticism may be mitigated and further self-aggrandizement may accrue by unconsciously equating being creative with being like God..... The result will be pleasure, experienced as renewed self-esteem and heightened secondary narcissism. (Rose, 1980, p.64)

Given Kramer's description of the process of sublimation previously referred to at the beginning of this thesis (p.16): "wherein drive energy is deflected from its original goal and displaced onto achievement, which is highly valued by the ego, and is, in most instances socially productive", one may ask - in which way does the concept of reparation differ from Freud's view of sublimation? 7

An examination of the essential differences is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

3. ART-MAKING: A DYNAMIC EQUILIBRIUM

3.1 SUBLIMATION AS A WAY TO ESCAPE NEUROSIS VERSUS CREATIVE INTEGRATION

In classical theory, the concept of sublimation attempts to explain the developmental process inherent in the transformation of an excess of the libido or sex instinct seeking discharge, into non-instinctual forms of behavior, which are socially acceptable. The inability to sublimate would lead to neurosis (caused by repression).

The process of sublimation is related to the death and life instinct. Freud believed that human beings are driven by two equally innate contradictory forces: the drive to live and the drive to die.

Aggression, destructiveness and the drive for control would be impulses originating from the death instinct whereas, sexual impulses and love would originate from the life instinct.

Loosely, the death instinct (Thanatos) refers to a wish to annihilate oneself and to destroy others whereas the life instinct (Eros) refers to self-preservative instincts.

Death instincts which are contrary to life instincts, are not so easily grasped.

Brown (1961) defines them as follows:

The Death instinct is quite separate from libido and represents, in fact an innate destructiveness and aggression directed primarily against the self. While the Life instinct is creative, the Death instinct is a force which is constantly working towards death and ultimately towards a return to the original inorganic state of complete freedom from tension or striving. (p.26).

It is to be noted that, as with the libido, death instincts are also liable to repression and therefore to neurosis.

It is because of its relation to destruction that the death instinct has often been criticized. For example, if we consider that death is the ultimate reduction of tension, how could it be related to the active impulse to destroy? Fromm voices it as follows:

If we assume, following Freud's reasoning on the basis of the repetition compulsion, that life has an inherent tendency toward slowing down and eventually dying, such a biologically innate tendency to die is also supposed to be the source of the passion for power and the instinct for mastery, and - when mixed with sexuality - the source of sadism and masochism, the theoretical tour de force must end in failure. (Eric Fromm, 1980, p.114)

Ricoeur counters this kind of critique. He says that:

The concept of the death drives which has been introduced by Freud in Beyond the Pleasure Principle published in 1920, is not necessarily to be seen as a wish or desire to die but rather as an awareness of death belonging to the normal process of all human beings and which cannot be experienced directly. "Freud speaks of the death drive as a 'mute' energy" (Ricoeur, 1970, p.294).

The semantic of the desire for death is different from the semantic of the desire for life. Gordon makes the point that:

Most psychoanalysts, ... including Freud in his 'later years', could not accept that the death instinct might possibly express itself directly in terms of an actual wish for death or even in the capacity to have a mental representation of it. Instead they came to believe that the death instinct is really a "silent" or a "dumb" instinct, and that it can therefore express itself only in terms of either a fear of death or as aggression. (1978, p.27)

One can understand the principle of fearing death and even of repressing or denying it but why should it express itself in terms of aggression? According to object-relations theory, this occurs because we project part of our inborn death instinct outward; since this is perceived as bad, the ego transforms the remaining part into aggression to protect itself.

When a mother is perceived as separate, babies play at destroying their mother and out of the guilt of having destroyed what they love, they play at re-creating her. Feelings of destruction arise from the denial that something exists separate from them. In other words, to recognize that one is living as a separate entity is to recognize that one will die. We can understand that the need to merge is a reaction against death and therefore associated to a life drive. But its opposite, the need to differentiate oneself, which is related to death drives, could also be seen as a wish.

A good life denies neither its real and often painful difficulties nor the dark aspects of our psyche; rather it is a life in which our

hardships are not permitted to engulf us in despair, and our dark impulses are not allowed to draw us into their chaotic and often destructive orbit. (Bettelheim, 1983, p.110)

It seems that unless we deal with the fact of death, we cannot develop a capacity to live. Aggression, destructiveness and the drive for control can perhaps be explained from the individual's creative reaction against death and not so much from the fear of it. The fear of death would lead to a fear of life. Instead, it is in facing it that we can experience creative living.

In fact, as pointed by Winnicott, inhibitions are the result of a fear of returning to an undifferentiated state where self and object are fused. A rigid personality can then be equated with a dead soul.

"And both (meaning Freud and Jung) believed that the knowledge of his own impermanence and mortality acts in man as a major force in his psychic life and development" (Gordon, 1978, p.26).

Paul Ricoeur (1970) who has examined Freud's writing on the subject of the death drives writes:

Living things are not put to death by external forces which surpass them, as in Spinoza; they die, they go to death by an internal movement: 'everything living dies for internal reason...the aim of all life is death. Better - or worse? - life itself is not the will to change, to develop, but the will to conserve itself. (p.290)

This seems to be a paradox when one thinks that living creatively involves changes, growth and development. It is as if, without the death instincts, life would be experienced as a platitude and therefore not worth living. Contrary to death instincts which are associated with hate and destruction, life instincts are the ones that prompt us to love one another and to procreate and prolong our lives into the creation of new beings.

Paul Ricoeur further states that:

If the living substance goes to death by an inner movement, what fights against death is not something internal to life, but the conjugation of two mortal substances. Freud calls this conjugation Eros; the desire of the other is directly implied in the emergence of Eros; it is always with another that living substance fights against death, against its own death, whereas when it acts separately it pursues death through the circuitous paths of adaptation to the natural and cultural environment. (p.291)

Life instincts would then tend towards the need for fusion whereas death instincts would tend towards the need to differentiate oneself, to the need for self-actualization. It is from the dualism of both that human beings find meanings to their lives. Psychological health may therefore be found in the recognition that both drives exist in us.

We may say that both processes are infused with contradictory feelings of hate and love, aggression and sex which, by being contradictory and therefore intolerable (ambivalent) seek and demand integration.

In Jungian, Kleinian and post-Kleinian terms, integration is achieved through creation.

In classical theory, the process is explained in terms of the sublimation of instincts. At this point, a brief recapitulation of Freud's basic concepts seems necessary to fully understand what sublimation means.

The inner process or psychic structure (the soul) is presented as being composed of the id, ego and superego. Briefly, the id represents all primitive tendencies, impulses or instincts. It is active, demanding aiming at direct and immediate satisfaction. It knows no values, no logic, no morality. It is governed by the pleasure principle.

The ego takes the reality principle into account, the prime function being one of coordinating the demands of the external world and of the id. It includes conscious and unconscious elements.

The superego, which is equated with conscience, arises from the moral dictates of our parents (and is

therefore cultural) which, by a process of identification, is taken within us. It is only in part, conscious. ✓

An individual's character structure is the result of the struggle between these three components.

The libido, which we have seen is one of the life instincts and which applies to any pleasurable sensations related to body functioning, develops in a definite chronological sequence from birth onwards. The process involves three maturational stages centered on the pleasure derived from specific erotogenic zones: mouth, anus and genitals. Although these pregenital phases are biologically determined they are also influenced by the parental attitudes and events experienced while passing through them. 7

The ease or difficulty experienced by the child in passing through the pregenital phases has a fundamental influence upon its later attitudes as an adult towards such basic forms of behavior as giving and taking, defiance or submission, love or hate and towards such sentiments as stinginess.

or generosity, optimism or pessimism, interest or indifference about others. (Brown, 1961, p.24)

If difficulties encountered in passing through these stages are too great in intensity, growth is arrested through defensive mechanisms aimed at avoiding the anxiety produced by the conflict. The arresting growth, called a fixation, will remain important in the formation of the individual's personality and might in adulthood, under the influence of social pressure, bring a regression to it.

For example, if a fixation occurs in the oral stage in which the primary activities are of receiving and taking (sucking, incorporating and biting) from the mouth, the individual's character will have as a major defense, projection, denial and introjection.

The anal character, whose phase is characterized by giving and withholding, (expulsion and retention) will develop defenses such as intellectualization and reaction formation.

The aim of gratification in the phallic stage being heterosexualizing interaction (penetration), its corresponding character will develop as a major defense, repression.

If no fixation occurs, the person will develop a mature sexuality (genital sexuality) which combines the pregenital (always present) with the genital drives. A sexual perversion can only manifest itself when pregenital drives supersede the genital ones, the goal of the latter being intercourse and orgasm. The genital character has as its main defense or rather adaptive mechanism against pregenital libidinal drives, sublimation.

Defenses occur when an immediate satisfaction of id impulses are dangerous to our well being by fear of punishment and guilt. In other words, the function of defenses is to protect the ego from either society or superego.

The superego, which we have seen arises in part from the moral dictates of the parents owes its origin, according to Freud, to the Oedipus complex.

In the boy, sexual attraction towards the mother presses him to eliminate (castrate) his rival. The process elicits fear of being, in turn, castrated, with guilt associated with the destructive impulses directed against his father that he loves. In the girl, out of disappointment over the lack of a penis, she turns her love towards the father and rejects the mother. As with the boy, the process gives rise to feelings of guilt.

While passing the Oedipus complex, the child learns that direct and immediate expression of libidinal and destructive drives is taboo. This is caused by the fear of parental figures and the guilt associated with feelings of destruction about a loved parent. (In Melanie Klein's theory, the superego operates much earlier).

"Analysts who believe in an innate destructive instinct also believe inevitably in an inherent sense of guilt derived from awareness of the wish to destroy what is loved, to defy what is also submitted to" (Rycroft, 1968, p.60).

↓ The Oedipal complex (which is part of the larger ambivalence between the life and death instincts) represents a situation in which both libidinal and destructive drives are at play but are repressed by threat of the superego. They are resolved through a sense of guilt and process of identification. Broadly speaking, the process of identification implies that the child recognizes the difference that exist between the sexes and age gaps. In this process, the child will attempt to become like the parent he has idealized. The boy, once he has reached maturity, will normally look for a women of his own and the girl for a man, along socially approved lines.

Sublimation is the process by which the flow of pregenital drives (libidinal and destructive) is directed towards an alternative goal being acceptable to society. (The genital drives I believe, are satisfied through mature sexuality). The process involves a battle between id impulses and superego requirements. As proposed by Melanie Klein, the process demands good identification with ideal parental figures. Good identification implies that the

child's ego ideal is projected onto the parent who in turn becomes a model.

Idealization is the process by which a child in recognizing his/her own weakness and dependence, projects onto a parent what he previously thought he was: omnipotent. The child will now aim at becoming like (not imitate which implies a notion of falseness) the parent which serves the function of building his/her own ego ideal: a goal to attain. If no identification is achieved, no sense of guilt is allowed to develop and therefore no sublimation can develop either. For example the individual might (if not prevented from the fear of being discovered) seek direct gratification of id impulses (i.e. raping, killing) or again might continue to idealize his/her own self (narcissism) thereby avoiding all the anxieties involved in the process of growing psychically.

Narcissism arising from a failure to idealize a parent through the Oedipus complex has been recognized by Chasseguet-Smirgel, as the source of sexual perversions. Through such idealizations, sublimation

is still active but is not necessarily authentic.

On the other hand, Ricoeur believes that sexual perversions are the result of an over-developed sense of guilt. Death and life instincts are sublimated into the form of sadism and/or masochism. In such cases, id impulses are deflected but due to the severity of the superego, take the form of punishment.

He says:

Caught between a murderous id and a tyrannical and punishing conscience, the ego appears to have no recourse other than self-torment or the torturing of others by diverting its aggressiveness toward them. Hence the paradox: 'the more a man checks his aggressiveness towards the exterior the more severe - that is aggressive - he becomes in his ego ideal' - as if aggressiveness either has to be turned outward against others or turned round upon the self. One immediately perceives the religious extension of this ethical cruelty in the projection of a higher being who punishes inexorably. (Ricoeur,

1970, p.299)

The severity of the superego may also lead a person to repress drives resulting in a neurosis, which in classical theory, obviates the process of sublimation. Thus, in Freud's theory, it is through a good internalized parental figure that we can develop a capacity to sublimate and therefore to integrate opposing forces. In Melanie Klein's theory, this holds true, with the exception that guilt feelings, arising from one's own destructive impulses, are explained in terms of a wish to repair what has been destroyed. Therefore self-respect is re-established.

Chasseguet-Smirgel believes that the notion of reparation is more allied to a reaction formation than to sublimation in that only id impulses are sublimated. According to Melanie Klein's theory, the concept of reparation aims at repairing the object while sublimation aims at the reparation of the subject itself.

In any event, sublimation aims at integration and represents the most efficient way of dealing with both

the demands of the id and of the superego. It aims at gaining satisfaction of pregenital drives through a channel that does not harm either the person itself or its others.

✓ It is intimately connected with phantasy bridging the necessity of complying with the demands of society (to love one's neighbor), to the demands of the id which may appear to be destructive and immoral. "In essence Freud saw art as illusion and as denying reality.... it provided one of the most acceptable means for man to deal with human suffering and misfortune" (Hasley, 1977, p.102). Broadly speaking, we may say that sublimation which is related to life and death instincts, aims at bridging the deceiving world of reality (human destiny and its inevitable outcome) and the inherent urge to live according to its own standards, perhaps in a creative reaction against death.

"Man has always endeavoured to go beyond the narrow limits of his condition". (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1984, p I). This we have seen is achieved through creation which involves sublimation. It can be

expressed in a multitude of ways in organizing our lives, its most obvious expression being in art.

The need human beings have to go beyond the narrow limits of their condition is being expressed through creativity but it can also manifest itself pathologically, although creatively, in sexual perversions.

3.2 THE PATHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CREATIVITY; SEXUAL PERVERSION

In essence, creativity aims at destroying reality because of the unbearable suffering we experience when facing it (i.e., the pain experienced in the first separation with mother as explained by the Kleinians).

To face it means to recognize our helplessness, inadequacy, distress, dependence and impotence vis-à-vis our destiny. Religious attitudes stem from human beings' desire to overcome the pain felt in front of their helplessness, the idealized parent being replaced by God. As is the case with the boy who wants to become like his father, human beings aspire to be like God. The artist, who woos the world hopes to attain such perfection; to be like God. Wanting to be like implies that the person recognizes that the other is in possession of great qualities, therefore eclipsing any competition. If there is competition in this state of affairs, then we speak of rivalry; God and the rebel archangel.

While passing through the Oedipus complex, children learn to recognize their helplessness which they try to overcome by the efforts made in gaining the attributes and qualities possessed by the parent. According to Freud, the qualities are primarily coveted to win the love of the parent of the opposite sex. The recognition by the child of his/her inadequacy to become the sexual partner of one of his parents, seems to play an important role in the formation of a mature sexuality; it is closely connected with the development of personal standards of perfection.

The initial narcissistic state of perfection with the mother is projected (along with a recognition of sex and age gap) onto the parents. As explained by Rose earlier in this work, (p.71) "omnipotence becomes attributed to the parents, who seem godlike, even though the child now knows him- or herself to be weak....Whereas before they were grandiose notions of the person the child thought him- or herself to be, they have now become transformed into perfectionistic goals to which the child aspires in order to earn self-respect" (1980, p.63).

Chasseguet-Smirgel emphasizes the role of mothers in encouraging their children to project their ego ideal onto a model, the wish "to be big". She says that: "The mother's attitude of seduction may, however, destroy in her child this wish to be big and grown up and prevent him from experiencing this admiration for his father who becomes his model for identification, the bearer of the child's Ego Ideal" (1984, p.29).

Unfortunately, in her thesis on sexual perversions, Chasseguet-Smirgel mainly examines the boy's side, saying almost nothing of the girl. Perhaps this is due to Freud having neglected to some extent the feminine aspect of sexuality and Chasseguet-Smirgel is Freudian in outlook.

She says that the abolition of obstacles and efforts usually required to reach mature sexuality (i.e., the process of identification and idealization) leads the pervert to believe that no gap exists between sex (man and woman) and generations (child and adult).

The perverse temptation leads one to accept pregenital desire and satisfactions [attainable by the small boy] as being equal to or even superior to genital desires and satisfactions [attainable only by the father]. Erosion of the double difference between the sexes and the generations is the pervert's objective.

(Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1984, p.2)

The abolition of the difference between parents and children which bring with it a disavowal of sexual reality of truth and of reality altogether, necessarily implies the reconstruction of another reality.

According to Freud, the faecal mass or "stick" foreshadows the genital penis, the production of stools becomes a prototype of childbirth [the infantile sexual theory of giving birth through the anus], the daily separation from the excrement in the rectum anticipates genital coitus". (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1984, p.11-12)

Genital sexuality or mature sexuality is established through a stage in which the child is confronted with the reality of his/her inadequacy, the reality of his/her helplessness and of his/her destiny. To replace this stage by the one preceding it, the anal stage, is according to Chassequet-Smirgel, to defy reality. Perversion, in her view, is a temptation in the mind, common to us all that goes beyond the limits of sexual deviation as strictly defined.

The pleasure connected with transgression is sustained by the fantasy that - in breaking down the barriers which separate man from woman, child from adult, mother from son, daughter from father, brother from sister, the erotogenic zones from each other, and, in the case of murder, the molecules in the body from each other - it has destroyed reality, thereby creating a new one, that of the anal universe where all differences are abolished. (Chassequet-Smirgel, 1984, p.3)

We are confronted here with a world of total confusion. This type of creation is not merely a

question of altering outer reality to make it closer to our inner reality. It is total destruction (in phantasy) of what is outside in order to re-create it anew. It is to reduce the whole universe to faeces where all particles are equal and interchangeable. It is true rivalry with 'God' or with the parental figure. The father's potent sexual organ is reduced to excrement.

According to Chasseguet-Smirgel, the abolition of differences between parents and children prevents the suffering not only of those experienced when recognizing our inadequacy but of those related to castration, separation, absence and death. Creations by the pervert are not considered as being authentic but rather as imitations, not only sexually but in other fields as well.

As the introjection of paternal capacities and attributes has not been accomplished, and as the desires linked to that process have been repressed and counter-cathected, the subject will not have at his disposal the desexualized [sublimated] libido necessary to achieve his

work. (Chassequet-Smirgel, 1984, p.70)

At the roots of the pervert's creations, lies the ego ideal but since identification with the parental figure has failed, the raw material for its realization remains unmodified. Id impulses are not deflected but used directly since there exists no battle between them and the superego. In the perverse act, they are totally and directly released. It is to be noted that one cannot disregard the fact that in a personality there may exist in every proportion of efficiency, a place for perversions, neurosis and genuine creations.

Nevertheless, it is believed that since true creation involves a displacement of sexual energy into a form acceptable to society, the pervert's creations can only be but imitations.

For Chassequet-Smirgel, "the pervert's creation represents his own magnified phallus which, for lack of an adequate identification with the father, can only be factitious" (p.70). Therefore, in her opinion, the pervert (having failed to identify with a

parental figure) is always in search of an identity which, if it is found, is necessarily usurped. There we are confronted with notions of falseness, inauthenticity, imposture, distorted modes of reasoning and so on, all revolving around the idealized phallus, a false pillar, an anal penis whose kinship with a fetish she says, is undeniable.

The notion of falseness is built on the assumption that at the anal stage, faeces are narcissistically compared to gold. When reaching the phallic stage where the penis becomes in turn the value to be preserved, by lack of identification, penis and faeces are associated, resulting in a magnified penis being but an imitation of the genital one.

The need for the pervert to conceal his instincts, his objects, the pregenital universe in which he lives, ultimately aims at idealizing his own Ego. He becomes one with his worshipped part objects, a transfigured image of his own attributes, thus magnified. He sees himself with complacency in his glorified instincts, just as

he used to see himself in his mother's loving eyes in order to find therein the confirmation of his adorable perfection. (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1984, p.93)

Sexual perversions, which manifest themselves through a fixation at the anal stage, are basically the result of a failure to identify due to a failure of reality-acceptance; a failure to deal with the disillusion of its own omnipotence, the disillusion that our faeces are not so beautiful and worth worshipping.

According to Marion Milner, the concept of disillusion is worked out through the discovery by infants of the real qualities of their faeces which they perceived as a loved gift. For the individual whose fixation point is at this stage, the concept of disillusion takes on a special meaning. Orgastic sensations come to be identified with the feelings experienced in the letting go of the body products.

She suggests that the lack of discrimination between the orgastic giving of the body products and

the products themselves is responsible for the later idealization of it.

She says that for these people, the surrender of objective valuation to the spontaneous creative force can be perceived as a very dangerous undertaking.

She writes:

Thus there is a dread of the total letting go of all the excited mess, faeces, urine, vomit, saliva, noise, flatus, no one differentiated from the other, a state of blissful transcending of boundaries, which, to the conscious ego, would be identified with madness. The dread is of a wish for the return to that state of infancy in which there was no discrimination between the orgasmic giving of the body products and the products themselves. (Milner, 1957, p. 150)

According to her, to help the individual with a fixation at this stage would consist in bringing the person to realize that their delusion is not in the idealization but in the lack of discrimination between

faeces and orgasmic sensations.

The theory of Marion Milner, contrary to Chasseguet-Smirgel, can be applied to both men and women.

To summarize, we may say that sexual perversions relate to a creative attempt to deal with a failure in the capacity to overcome difficulties we all experience in passing through the anal stage. Broadly speaking, it has to do with the failure to deal with the disillusion of death, which first manifests itself through the disillusion of the discovery of our impotence, of our powerlessness to do whatever we want. The insurmountable hate we may experience through this discovery leads us to wanting to destroy anything that exists. The life instincts (the love of one's neighbor) tell us the other is in the same situation.

But having come to the conclusion through this research that health is associated with the creative integration of both the inner and outer realities, sexual perversions, although creative, are

pathological. They are pathological mainly, because the claim of external reality is not granted an equal right to the claim of inner reality. The pervert's aim is to reduce the universe to nothing, to wipe it out completely from his/her universe. He wants no separation and demarcation. "Differences having been abolished, the feelings of helplessness, smallness, inadequacy, as well as absence, castration and death - psychic pain itself also disappear" (Chasseguet-Smirgel, p.13).

In essence, perversions are the results of a failure in reality-acceptance.

My exploration of the pathological aspect of creativity is but a glance into what it may represent. More research is needed but to elaborate any further is beyond the scope of this study.

3.3 ART AND THE ANALYTICAL PROCESS

What is the use of knowing about what sublimation is and about the nature of creativity - of knowing that it was first experienced in the earliest years of our lives? What is the use of knowing that health is fundamentally the process by which one brings together two realities, inner and outer, subjective and objective, primary and secondary, dream and actuality, life and death? For art therapists, what is the use of knowing all that? Are they (are we) to tell a client suffering from some incapacities, "Paint and sublimate". This would be a real nonsense since the person would be there because he/she cannot.

It is basic to analytic theory that to change a situation that was built on one involving emotions (experiences between mother-child) one has to live it again through emotions. Psychoanalysis aims at re-living a situation from which a person has come to experience difficulties. It is also basic that mere intellectualization of one's difficulties does not succeed in alleviating the pain and suffering one may experience through such difficulties. In

psychoanalysis, emotions are re-lived through the relationship between the client and the therapist in the transference and counter-transference phenomena. That way the person comes to understand, through emotions lived in the relationship, the cause of her/his difficulties. It is so to speak in the identification of the emotion re-lived that the person will be able to trace back the cause of these difficulties.

But then, why should we 'invite' our clients to paint if their problems can be resolved without it (especially if they think it is childish)? What does art contribute to the analytical process ?

The most attractive phenomena ascribed to the process of art-making certainly resides in the parallelism made with the process at work in the earliest years of our lives, in that, it allows emotion to be expressed spontaneously, therefore lessening unconscious defenses associated with repressed but none the less painful material. What is being felt is reflected metaphorically through colors and forms and therefore more directly than if they

were only verbalized. The understanding of one's own difficulties then comes from the observations of problems related to the making of the image and to what the image itself may represents.

Art-making does not exclude transference and counter-transference phenomena with the therapist, nor does it exclude the verbalizing afterwards. Rather, the analytical process is enlarged by providing a 'potential space' which, we have seen, is so much needed in order to grow psychically. A place (canvas or sheet of paper) is therefore provided for a dialogue not only with the therapist but both with the image, i.e. for a dialogue within the self (between its inner and outer image).

In considering the importance our first relationship has on our subsequent ones, learning to paint (in the sense Winnicott sees it - as in playing) may well be the equivalent of learning to live. It may well represent for the one of us whose intimate privacy (the potential space) has been exploited, an opportunity to experience the right to be ourselves, the right to be unique from others, to reclaim what at

one time had been stolen.

By engaging ourselves in making something out of something that exists externally (the medium, paint, clay, etc.), both rights are emphasized, both the external and internal realities.

For by it one could find an "other" a public reality, that was very pliant and undemanding; pencil and chalk and paper provided a simplified situation in which the other gave of itself easily and immediately to take form of the dream, it did not stridently insist on its own public nature, as I had found natural objects were inclined to do! So by means of this there could perhaps come about the correcting of the bias of a too docilely accepted public vision and a denied private one. (Milner, 1957, p.117)

It seems that, in art, our inner reality which may well be equated with our dreams and illusions (omnipotence) does not take precedence over the external reality, that is of disillusion (impotence) because it necessitates the recognition of both; that

is the creation of an image and the material used for the creation of that image. In her book on learning how to paint, Milner refers to the pain experienced when she realized that creations were not, as we commonly assume, the result of one's own objective projection but the result of a complex interchange between what comes from inside and what comes from outside.

For those of us whose external reality has been denied to a degree that our mode of thinking is being distorted, learning how to paint may well represent a way in which at last our wishes, hopes and dreams can make sense. By having to take into account a bit of the external reality, we are bound to realize that our needs are closer to being satisfied than we may have thought they were. They can be given a shape, a form, something that has a correspondence to something that really exists. In learning how to paint, we learn how to find in the external world, something that matches our dreams.

Also, by achieving a concretisation of dreams, a permanent recording of the transfigurations,

there was the possibility that other people could share them. And by the fact of other people being able to share, vicariously, the moment when one's gods had descended, one then gained a firmer hold on the spiritual reality of one's gods- or one's devils. So one came to know more clearly what one loved and would want to cherish in living and what one hated and would seek to eliminate or destroy; and by this one's life developed a clearer pattern and coherence and shape and was less a blind drifting with the tides of circumstance. (Milner, 1957, p.120)

The dialectic relation of both external and internal realities, subjective and objective, can be seen in terms of maturity, as that which takes into account one's own needs and the needs of others (or an other). Illness represents a dominance of one side over the other. As pointed out by Winnicott, people may live satisfactory lives but be ill in a psychiatric sense because of a weak sense of reality or because they are out of touch with their subjective world.

According to Milner, when one fails to establish real contact with the external world (originating in problems of reciprocity with mother and child) one of three things could happen:

First one could try to deny the external demand and become an active, dictatorial egoist (as in sexual perversions), actively denying the need of the other, trying to make one's own wishes alone determine what happened. Secondly one could become a passive egoist retreating from public reality altogether and taking refuge in a world of unexpressed dreams, becoming remote and inaccessible. Thirdly, one could allow the outside world to become dictator, one could fit in to external reality and its demands, but fit in all too well, the placating of external reality could become one's main preoccupation, doing what other people wanted could become the center of life, one could become seduced by objectivity into complete betrayal of one's own side of the matter. (Milner, 1957, p.116-117)

The experience of art-making allows for both the

privacy and sharing of one own's phantasies or dreams on both the sensory and intellectual levels.

It teaches those of us who have become seduced by objectivity that inner perception, be it of a loving or destructive nature, can become accessible to both the person who is doing the making and the person (or persons) around. It also teaches those of us who only believe in our own world that the use of this bit of external reality (paint, clay, etc.) is in itself a way to relate to others.

Art teaches us how to both fuse with and separate ourselves from the world around us. It serves as an outlet for forbidden tendencies to be expressed in a manner acceptable to others. It satisfies our needs as well as the needs of others. It takes into account inner and outer realities.

For the self to have any reality, it is essential to experience life, not by throwing one's self into it so completely that there is nothing left, (in complying too much to the demands of society) neither by blocking other selves so much that we end up living

as hermits (in denying external demands) but simply by participating in other selves.

A

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is anything



you
can
get away
with



"The biggest and best woman in the world,"
an 82-foot-long, 20-foot-high sculpture, in Moderna
Museet, Stockholm. You can walk around in her.

From "The Medium is the Massage"
Marshall McLuhan, Bantam Books, Inc, 1967

CONCLUSION

In broad terms, we may say that, from a psychoanalytical point of view, creativity emerges out of our struggle to integrate our life and death instincts; this is essentially what all life consists of in so far as it can be seen as sublimation. It seems that this integration is what we try to achieve when reacting actively against death while taking into consideration our own needs and those of others. In other words, the knowledge we have of the inexorability of time prompts us to react against it and act as if it would not be true. Unconsciously, this leads us to wanting to change reality. We would like to believe that we are eternal but since we know we are not, we invent structures, forms that express endless recurrence of a life and death cycle. We may say that in creativity, we play at dying in order to live again. This process, first experienced in our relationship with our mother, approximates the need we have to be different and separate from others and at the same time the need to "relive" earlier periods of our life, in a state of fusion.

Aesthetic experiences can be seen as deriving from this constant need for both fusion and separation. Psychoanalysts refer to creativity in different ways, but they all seem to agree that the process is a means to both deny and confront reality.

While each theory has contributed to my understanding of the psychic activities involved in the act of creating, the theory developed by Winnicott seems the most significant for art therapists. His concept does not exclude Freud's theory of sublimation, Jung's theory of symbolism nor does it exclude Klein's theory of reparation. Rather, it explains how and why an individual experiences all these phenomena or how and why he/she may be prevented from doing so.

If therapy aims at re-doing what at one was experienced as negative, then the notion of a potential space, when therapeutically applied, seems to offer hope for those experiencing serious or minor difficulties. This space, I have come to believe, should be provided in an art therapy context in the

same manner as when it was provided by the mother, assuming it was a good enough and safe environment. That way, the individual may learn through playing with paints and colors how to deal with his/her conflicts, thereby giving shape to unidentified emotions.

The role of the therapist would then be to assist in the deciphering of the true nature of the conflict, not necessarily by interpreting images, but rather by helping the individual to explore and develop his/her insight.

One of the most important element in this research about the nature of creativity and its relevance to art-making is the therapeutic potentiality inherent in the act of creating, the potentiality inherent in learning how to paint. What also appears to be of prime importance is the similarity that exists between the creative process and the process at work in the earliest years of our life. The complexity of the maturational process and the panoply of emotion associated with it can be re-experienced and clarified through the metaphoric

use of images in ways that are not possible through verbal means.

In their search for a model, art therapists have borrowed a lot from established psychotherapeutic disciplines, neglecting to some extent what art can offer. But art therapy is not psychoanalysis; rather it adds to it another dimension, that of the learning of the creative process, of art-life through concrete and tangible materials. Art therapy brings to bear its own dimensions, its context for the bringing to light of impulses and languages. The articulation of this dimension, with and through the client, is what I have come to see as the role of an art therapist.

ADDENDUM

My own experience of art-making brought me to realize that art does not only serve to integrate and reconcile opposite tendencies but also serves to simplify complex and undecipherable feelings and emotions. Art experience taught me that I know more than I can understand.

I believe healing occurs not only in the resolution of some conflicting feelings but in the precise manner in which this takes place, as for example when an image may sometimes impose itself as if it had a life of its own. Oftentimes, I am seduced and surprised about the rightness of a picture I just made. Although the effect of surprise is part of a dialogue going on within myself, seduction seems to relate more to aesthetic emotions.

From a viewer's point of view, I believe that works of art attract, not only because of the formal qualities we may find in them but also because their contents may trigger a correspondence to our own inner

reality.

When I fall in love with a work of art, I can be sure that something in the work has touched a part of me, perhaps a part that was repressed. In that sense, I believe works of art can cure, not only in the making of them but also in the viewing of them.

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