Journal of Jungian Scholarly Studies
Vol. 4, No. 4, 2009

Dionysos. Mainomenos. Lysios: Performing madness and ecstasy in the practices of art, analysis and culture

Gary D. Astrachan, Ph.D.

C.G. Jung Institute, Boston

This is a story about names and naming. What is it to name some thing, some one? What is it to name a god? What is it to name god?

This is a tale about the power of naming and the names of the great Greek god, Dionysos, a god of many names. Out of his multitude of epithets, the ritual and cult names denoting his numerous appearances and disappearances, each one embodying a specific cluster of attributes, aspects and images, we will take up in particular just two out of these innumerable names in greater depth.

The first of his epithets which we now turn towards is *Mainomenos*, Dionysos *Mainomenos*, the 'raving one,' the 'mad god.' *Mainomenos* comes from the word *mania*, which means in Greek, simply, 'madness.' He *is* the god behind madness and all forms of possession by an 'other.' In mania, we are taken over by something else, something that lives in the wilderness realms of the psyche, in the depths of nature. This god tracks *us* down. He is also known in this guise as *Zagreus*, Dionysos *Zagreus*, the 'great hunter.' The early nineteenth century German poet and prose writer Friedrich Hölderlin, himself entirely mad for nearly the whole second half of his life, from about 1806 until his death in 1842, writes in his poem, *Dichterberuf*, 'The Poet's Vocation' (1800-1):

> O all you heavenly gods
> And all you streams and shores, hilltops and woods,
> Where first, when by the hair one of you
> Seized us and the unhoped-for spirit
>
> Unforgettably came, astonishing, down
> Upon us, godlike and creative, dumbfounding
> The mind, every bone shook
> As if struck by lightning (Hölderlin, 1972, p. 33)

He *is* the god of 'otherness,' alterity, strangeness, the uncanny and the un-conscious. His startling presentation and appearance in all of the stories

Author contact: ceastra@yahoo.com

surrounding him *is* the manifestation of 'otherness.' Madness itself is backed by this god.

Dionysos *is* what remains in the end, un-represented. He is essentially perhaps, what may be in fact, not at all even representable.

The second of his names we will hear about today is *Lysios*, the 'loosener,' 'liberator,' 'releaser,' the untier of knots and bonds. This name is cognate with the practice which we perform, the profession of psycho-ana-lysis. *Lysis, lysios*. The loosening, dis-solving, not solving, and dis-solution, not solution, of the psyche, the soul. Psycho-ana-lysis as practice and performance is seen here as pointing us towards the freeing of the psyche, the loosening of the soul.

The *topos*, or 'place' which Dionysos inhabits since the very first appearance of his name on a Linear B clay tablet from about 2000 B.C. as the god of wine, 'Di-oinos,' is the altered space of intoxication, becoming 'other-ed' to one's self. As one of his greatest civilizing gifts, wine *is* the fiery fluidity of the god's presence, his manner and matter of manifestation.

As the god from Nysa or Nysos, 'Dio-Nysos,' from 'the place of Nysos,' he is always and everywhere, in each of his blazing hierophanies, the god from beyond the borders of the known. Nysos is 'away.' He is the god of the wild, and he arrives from places of wilderness. He brings with him the mysterious scent of danger, desire and strangeness. He is called the 'stranger' in Euripides' play, the *Bacchae*. He *is* the 'stranger god.' He is always the foreigner, alien, disturbing, deranging and unsettling.

There were at least a dozen places called Nysa or Nysos in antiquity, all of which serve as one or another of his legendary birthplaces or home-grounds, ranging from the mountainous and thickly-wooded forest regions of Thrace, in the extreme north, in contemporary Bulgaria, to a lush and exotic southern Nysa on Africa's Red Sea, in spice-laden Saba, in today's Ethiopia.

The most famous land of Nysa, however, where it is said he was brought shortly after his birth, to protect him from the persecutory wrath of Hera, is in Asia, in ancient Lydia or Phrygia, in western Turkey. Located at the eastern fringes of the Greek world, this Nysa was already long since cultivated by Phoenicians, Anatolians, Akkadians, Hittites and Persians. It is there that he is raised by an all-female society of nursing nymphs who become his mothers, lovers, devotees and attendants, the Maenads, the 'mad women' followers of Dionysos. These women are also called the Bacchantes, or the Bacchae, the 'initiated ones,' and Dionysos himself has, as the other major name by which he was known right through the Roman era and up until today: Bacchus.

Dionysos-Bacchus always appears surrounded by the swirling frenzy of his maddened retinue, blissfully dancing women, ithyphallic satyrs, flowing wine, curling ivy, and spotted leopard skins – nature untamed and untrammeled, rampant and unleashed. He usually arrives amidst chaos and confusion. He comes also as an

affront and threat to the noble, remote and rational Homeric Greeks, with their heroically established order and calm. Amongst his orgiastic and enraptured cortege, he appears whenever and wherever, wreaking his joyful havoc. He *is*, in Freud's apt term, the 'return of the repressed.' To the classical, patriarchal and sober maxim inscribed above Apollo's temple in Delphi, 'know thyself,' Dionysos counters with his own: 'lose thyself.'

There are basically two major stories of the birth, early years and fast times of this god. The first, enshrined in the *Bacchae*, the still-shocking basic testament and bible of Dionysiac religion, is the traditionally-accepted, most widespread and mainstream tale of his origin. In this version, his mother is called Semele, and she is one of three daughters born to King Cadmus of Thebes. Semele, whose name itself is cognate with the Russian word *zemly*a, meaning 'earth,' thereby traces her own very ancient lineage back to her pre-history as a neolithic matriarchal earth goddess, the Thracian-Phrygian Zembla. In this Theban tale, however, when yet a maiden, Princess Semele catches the eye of the sky-ruling leader of all the Olympian gods and goddesses, Zeus. He seduces her and they begin a clandestine love affair which transpires at night in her royal bedchamber. The wife of Zeus, Hera, Queen of the Olympians, gets wind of this nocturnal romance, and, disguising herself as an aged servant, insinuates herself into the courtly Theban household. She slowly persuades Semele to find out just who her invisible lover really is. After all, she suggests, he might be a prince, or a great hero, or even a god. So Semele, at Zeus' very next visit, makes him promise to appear to her in his true form, so that she might see him in all of his splendor. Zeus, heavy-hearted, but bound by his own oath to fulfill his paramour's sole wish, reveals himself to her in his natural form as a lightning bolt, incinerating the hapless Princess Semele right there on the spot. Just before she is reduced to a pile of smoldering ash, however, he snatches from her womb the as-yet unborn neonate, the infant god Dionysos. Opening up his own male thigh, Zeus then places Dionysos inside, closing him up with clasps of gold. After nine months, he brings the child to full term, and Dionysos, reborn from this masculine womb, earns the epithet *Dithyrambos*, the god 'of the double door,' he of the 'second birth.' The dithyramb becomes, of course, both the modality and the meter of all Dionysiac music and poetry from then on, and remains to this day the very rhythm of true tragic art and drama: swaying, unbalanced, disturbing and wild.

Hera, however, still infuriated by jealousy and maddened with murderous rage, is unremitting in her attempts to destroy this illegitimately begotten child, and so to protect him, Zeus entrusts the infant to his faithful servant and messenger, the god Hermes, who brings him to the nursing nymphs of far-away Nysa. Throughout the entire mythologem of Dionysos, we find that his frequent comings and goings often

turn out to be barely narrow escapes from those his openly sublime divinity arouses with the urge to annihilate and rend apart.

In the second version of his birth, which is the more mystical, alternative and countercultural story of the god's origins, and was actually historically forced underground precisely because of the dominant, collective and canonical myth enshrined as above in the *Bacchae*, his father is once again Zeus, but Zeus now in his underworldly form, Zeus *Chthonios*, the subterranean Zeus, who in this dark semblance is synonymous and identical with his own brother Hades, Lord of the Underworld, realm of the shades. His mother in this tale is Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, also known as *Kore*, the 'maiden,' and she is the bride of Hades and Mistress of the Underworld. Conceived in that eternal darkness, Dionysos is a child truly born of the depths, and of death.

Though born paradoxically in the land of darkness, one of his names from this story is *Iacchus*, the 'light-bringer.' Arriving at the winter solstice, the darkest time of the year, *Iacchus* is the seed of light sown in the blackness of the underworld. Like his mother Persephone who heralds the arrival of spring, Dionysos *Iacchus* is the hope of new life that arises out of death. He sparks and figures the possibility of re-birth from the cold earth of winter.

In this version of his story, he is seen shortly after his birth playing in a grassy field with his toys strewn all about him: a ball, a top, some tufts of wool, apples of gold, dice or knuckle bones, and a bull-roarer or noisemaker. Just at that moment, when he is laughing at his own reflection in a mirror, the Titans sneak up on him. The Titans are a primordial, barbarous and unruly race of giant-like beings from much earlier strata of Greek mythology, who, subdued and conquered by Zeus and the other Olympians, and then banished to the nether regions of Tartarus, are summoned, once again by Hera, from their retirement, to do her murderous bidding. The primitive creatures daub and smear their faces with white chalky paint and creep up on the innocently playing child. Coming upon him, they brutally grab and tear him apart limb from limb, scattering his ravaged and ragged body all around. All except for one limb or organ which is picked up by an unnoticed god or goddess, sometimes Apollo, Athena or Artemis, unobservedly lingering in the vicinity of this bloody scene. In one tale, it is the still-throbbing heart which is recovered. In other variations, it is the male member or phallus of Dionysos which is found. In either case, the overlooked body piece is brought to Rhea, the grandmother of all the gods. She then places it in a small basket, a 'cista,' upon her head, and carries it there for nine full months, or until the slain child god is once again ready to be reborn, whole, entire.

Returning to the gruesome scene of slaughter, however, the Titans collect the child's remaining body parts and proceed to first boil them in a cauldron, and then roast the gory limbs on spits. Adding unspeakable horror to monstrous infamy, they then greedily eat the body of the divine infant.

5 Astrachan

And here we come to the amazing anthropogenic portion of this story which is the central myth of the Dionysiac mystery religions. For when Zeus hears of the awful murder perpetrated upon his beloved son, he arrives at the feasting place of the god-gorged Titans and furiously blasts them with his thunderbolts, reducing them to piles of smoking ash. And as the kernel of this story which strikes to the heart of our own unique histories, it is out of these smoldering remains that Zeus creates nothing less than the entire human race.

So that from those distant beginnings until now, we human beings are ever since created out of a violent, fleshy, boundless and destructively Titanic part, which the Dionysiac initiates call the *soma*, the human 'body.' As well as we are also composed out of, and contain, a divine Dionysiac spark or part, our innermost being or god-likeness, which those ancient Greeks and we ourselves call to this day, the *psyche*, *psy-che*, the human 'soul.'

It is furthermore to that very re-membering, the putting back together again of all the scattered, dis-membered pieces, and to the re-collecting of all the dissociated, dis-articulated parts of the divine child, the god-figure within, that the Dionysiac faithful, and we ourselves, bend all of our efforts in the enterprise which we know as psycho-therapy, the *therapeia* of the *psyche*, the 'caring for' and cultivation of the 'soul.' It is thus the avowed aim of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis to heal and repair those traumatized, ruptured and primally split-off body-soul parts that we as human beings, actually *are*. To embrace, preserve and restore the riven body-soul of the god image we all carry within is our specific psychological legacy. To hold and contain both *soma and psyche*, both body *and* soul, is the unique psychological task and responsibility that this founding myth bestows upon us.

With the fundamentally new doctrine and notion deriving from this birth story, that we as human beings actually bear a divine Dionysiac core, for the first time in Western culture and spirituality, the possibility of a direct, spontaneous and unmediated experience of the god within is ushered into our own proto-European civilization. With this annunciatory tale of Dionysos *Demotikos*, the god 'of the people,' he levels and sweeps aside all the priestly hierarchies and divisions of caste, class, creed, race or gender that historically existed up to that point in Greek religion; and he furthermore proclaims his two main spiritual gifts to all: the altered states of ecstasy and enthusiasm. Coming from *ek-stasis*, 'standing outside' one's self, and one's ordinary life, ecstasy is the blessing we still collectively experience at all of those Dionysiac festivals still held all around the world in the same season as the ancients, in mid-winter, with Carnival, Carnevale, Mardi Gras, Fasching, or Fassnacht, with their similarly ritualistic performances of licensed sexuality, drugs, spirits, music, costume, and dance, the manifold celebrations of our physicality.

Rapturous and blissful communion with the god *is* the Dionysiac experience *par excellence*, the commingling of the bodily self breathing in unison with the rest of the world, loosened, and without boundaries, borders or edges. Dionysos images the embodied self, the self experienced *in* and *through* the body.

With the second major numinous experience which follows in his frenzied wake, enthusiasm, from the Greek, *en-theos*, being 'filled by the god,' Dionysos collapses the gulf and chasm formerly separating his devotees from the direct presence and fullness of his beneficent godhead. Friedrich Nietzsche, one of the most famous prophets of Dionysos, writes in his *Birth of Tragedy*:

> Now with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled and fused with his neighbor, but as one with him, as if the veil of *māyā* had been torn aside and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious primordial unity. (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 37)

As we are beginning to discern, Dionysos, throughout his entire mythologem, retains his indissoluble bond with the deep feminine, the vital, natural and bodily powers of the matriarchal earth and sea goddesses who had long preceded Zeus and the other Olympians. Dionysos is the avatar for their return. In re-membering and articulating the members of our own embodied Dionysiac selves, we re-collect our deepest connections with the mother, *mater*, matter, Mother Nature, and with our own nature, our natural wilderness places, our own true ground, both inside and out. In re-claiming our oneness with the material world, we also acknowledge and honor the Dionysiac soul spark irradiating the entire body of the natural world, the *anima mundi*, enlivening the objective psyche itself, the *unus mundus*, the one, unitary world in which we dwell, breathe and move as in a medium. In realizing the fact that the material world is shot through and through with this psychic, soul substance, we can once again, via *poiesis*, 'creating,' 'fabricating' and 'doing,' attempt to make life and nature truly matter.

Poiesis, that resonant word which gives us our poetry, poetics and poetizing, basically means 'making,' 'pro-ducing,' the bringing forth from concealment, hiddenness and non-being into the 'light of presence.' Plato writes that 'any cause that brings into existence something that was not there before is *poiesis*' (Agamben, 1999, p. 59). This compelling mission of totally transfiguring the inner and outer natural worlds is the shared project of both sublime artistic and postmodern psychoanalytic endeavor.

The image of Dionysos as heralding and re-creating our deepest bond with an embodied sense of self, our connections with the material and natural worlds, and with our transformative poetic and creative powers, is psychologically mirrored in the writings of the French psychoanalyst, Julia Kristeva, with her concepts of the 'maternal *chora*' and of '*jouissance*.' The quintessential Dionysiac experiences of ecstasy and enthusiasm are echoed in Kristeva's notion, following Jacques Lacan,

of *jouissance*, 'joy' or 'joyfulness,' a rapturous and polymorphous 'waving and weaving bliss' (Kristeva in Miller 1990, p. 326). Unlike the beautiful, which totalizes, brings comfort and pleasure, and is continuous with the known and accepted culture, the sublime visitation of *jouissanc*e, 'imposes a state of loss…. (that) discomforts…. (and) unsettles assumptions' (ibid.).

Kristeva claims that 'this crisis of the person…is a state of dissolution,' and, it 'can be experienced either as suffering or as rapture' (Kristeva, 1995, p. 22). *Jouissance*, paradoxically though, arrives through experiences of incompleteness, not-knowing, un-knowing, and may appear whenever the autonomy, substance and substantiality of our subjectivity is called into question or is endangered. It is a call 'out' of one's self. Kristeva writes: 'I am solicited by the other in such a way that I collapse' (ibid.).

The radical duality of Dionysos, even within his guise of *Mainomenos*, in the forms of madness which he brings, unearths the nature of an individual's connection to their earliest infantile states of relationship to, and containment within, a maternal environment. Kristeva aligns *jouissance* with the semiotic disposition and reverie that stems from the earliest symbiotic union with the mother, (as opposed to the developmentally later 'symbolic' phase, the realm of the father). This deeply-rooted, pre-verbal union with the maternal *chora*, the innermost space of experience that she derives from Plato's cosmology, provides a primal grounding in this unnameable, improbable receptacle, that she says, is anterior to all signs, linguistic, syntactic, or symbolic. The luminous serenity of the unrepresentable and inexpressible maternal body lies at the basis of all *jouissance* (Adams, 1997).

We can thus find in the languages of both art and analysis, however, the distinct capacities to at least attempt to reveal these powerful layers of experiencing.

> At the intersection of sign and rhythm, of representation and light, of the symbolic and the semiotic, the artist speaks from a place where she is not, where she knows not. She delineates what, in her, is a body rejoicing (*jouissant*). (Kristeva, 1980, p. 242)

The sublime artist or the psychoanalyst, in capturing, portraying, or arriving at this state through whatever mediums of *poiesis*, breaks through primal repression and returns us to the maternal *chora*, to this instinctual source and origin of all signifying,

> to the "space" prior to the sign, to this archaic disposition of primary narcissism that a poet brings to light in order to challenge the closure of meaning. (ibid., p. 281)

Jouissance is thus a deeply-felt experience of integration through a kind of dismemberment, through dis-solution and loosening; it is an anxiety-free bodily joy, and a primordial connection to an innermost being, to an original, indivisible self.

Let us now turn to that unique, participatory, ritualized form of communal religious celebration, which since its earliest inception, has basically told the story of the birth, passion, suffering and death of just one god. Greek tragedy is the performative enactment of the life of Dionysos. As the central portion of the Dionysiac festivals, held for the collective renewal and rejuvenation of the entire *polis*, tragedy originated from the agricultural rites of the dismemberment, death and rebirth of all plant life in the form of a young, dying, son-lover god figure. Especially through the primary Dionysian fluidities of semen, sap, blood and wine, Dionysos *Zoë*, his most basic spiritual essence as life energy itself, is revered as the energetic impulse of infinite life flowing through all things.

Tragedy, from *tragos*, a 'child goat,' began with the 'goat-song chorus,' the *tragoidia*, the song of the goat which was torn apart and eaten raw in memory of the god's somber fate. Dionysos *is* the original, sacrificial scape-goat. Besides looking back to our own earliest paleohominian ancestors who ate the still-living flesh of their prey, honoring Dionysos *Zagreus*, the 'great hunter,' the one who stalks *us* down, also foreshadows the Eucharist of the Christian communion service, the incorporation of the body and the wine-red blood of the god, who as victim, is himself hunted down, eaten, and reborn anew in the devotee.

Aristotle tells us, in his characteristically understated way, in the *Poetics*, his enduring work on the structure and function of Greek tragedy, that 'men have inscribed in their nature at once a tendency to represent…and to find pleasure in representation' (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, 1996, p. 283). He goes on to outline the nature of Greek tragedy as having a plot or story, action, character, diction, thought, spectacle and music (Aristotle, 1958). The constituents of the plot, he says, include: reversal, recognition or undoing, and suffering. This notion of *mimesis* that he uses, that all art, ritual and religion, indeed that all thought and feeling is an 'imitation' of nature, is both Aristotle's and our own foundationally assumed and 'given' experience and pattern for the creation, reception and possibility of all ritual performance, artistic or religious, whatsoever. That is, we 'experience,' learn, grow and develop through imitation, by imitating the behavior of the significant others of our early years. The capacity for identification between the spectators/audience and the actors/performers in the presentation of tragedy, is therefore developmentally based upon all of our earliest, cumulative, integrative and organizing infantile and childhood processes of psychological differentiation, especially: incorporation, introjection and internalization. From these ingested materials of the external world, taken in conjunction with our own genetically and archetypally-given psychical substrate, we construct whatever sense of self, 'other,'

inner and outer 'reality,' thinking, feeling, perceiving, and experiencing subjectivity that we eventually come to 'own,' possess or identify with as 'our selves.' This conglomerate creation constitutes our identity. This constructed sense of self and reality also allows for, among many other things, the empathic, relational connections established between an individual and any representation or representational ritual spectacle one experiences 'outside' in the world whatsoever.

Aristotle goes on in his *Poetics* to elucidate that this aesthetic bond enables Greek tragedy to ritualistically perform its prescribed socio-religious, political function of cohering the community through a collectively shared emotional *mythos*. The overriding and specific function of the tragic performance itself, he calls 'katharsis.' He unequivocally defines catharsis as the cleansing, purification and purgation of the emotions, especially those, he says, of pity and fear. Furthermore, this catharsis of the emotions is, once again, ritualistically dramatized for the benefit of the entire congregated *polis*, for identification by and with the whole body politic, the community of believers, spectators or audience attending this quintessential Dionysiac event.

In a much later and very different context, with the *polis* having undergone vast upheavals and reorganizations, Sigmund Freud, in the theatre of his consulting rooms, began in the 1890's to develop the first theories of psychoanalysis which he also squarely based on the principle of catharsis, the abreaction, expelling, expunging, or 'experiencing-out,' of the emotions. The new 'talking cure,' founded upon the singular rule of free association, and the performative power of words and language to release unconscious emotions, memories, infantile events and trauma, repressively held in check from early childhood on, becomes for Freud, not only the technique and method for the practical application of psychoanalytic thought, but it also becomes his theoretical and practical platform for understanding both the structure and function of dreams. That is, within this scientific model and perspective, dreams, like tragedy, indeed like the form and course of the psychoanalytical treatment situation itself, take place through a rational, linear, logically and sequentially unfolding dramatic narrative structure that has a beginning, middle and end, and that involves a plot, character, diction, thought and spectacle, and, reaches its conclusion in the expression, and satisfaction of an emotional experience. So that, dreams, like tragedy and the analytical process, in a strange reversal, take manifestly apparent place for Aristotle and for Freud, under the aegis of the god Apollo, Apollo *Katharsios*, the 'purifier,' the solar god of noble order, distance, purity, beauty, illusion, form and appearance, the half brother of Dionysos, and for Nietzsche, his co-creator, especially through tragedy, of all Greek culture and civilization. Tragedy thus functions since Aristotle, like much psychoanalysis since Freud, to purify the participant-observer, to maintain the

normatively established equilibrium and balance of the individual within his or her own *polis*, society, culture or civilization, with all of its discontents. Its radical, revolutionary and subversive power and mission of total transformation which has been there since its tumultuous Dionysiac beginnings, once again goes underground. Dreams, tragedy and analysis are thus seen from the conscious perspective, to be a series of considered Apollonian forms and comprehensibly ordered appearances, but as viewed from the depth perspective of the unconscious, can only conceivably manifest when they are combined with, and driven by, an underlying, seething and transfiguring Dionysian energy of un-loosening.

The one-sided Apollonian and Cartesian view of the psyche as a rational, mechanical and objectively understandable system, subject to scientific scrutiny, is perhaps now finally running its devastating dead-end course. We are witnesses to and participants in the terminal death throes of our enlightened, modernist era, with all of its techno-scientific and Judaeo-Christian mythologies and metanarratives grinding us to a halt in the accumulating rubble and detritus of our consumerist and capitalist economies. In acknowledging the decline and failure of all the great, overarching, structural, metaphysical and metapsychological theories and systems of thought, with their grandiose and totalizing strivings for wholeness, growth, comprehensiveness, progress, finality, identity and closure, we must suffer and accompany their precipitous fall during this liminal state we are in, before the time of the god that has not yet come, while still working, preparing, theorizing and creating a new ground for the unthought that remains to be thought, 'poietically' establishing a space for the unknown god's arrival.

Following upon Freud's discovery of dreams as the *via regia*, the 'royal road,' to the unconscious, Carl Jung, in the only papers he devoted exclusively to analyzing the nature and form of dreams, also employs an even more explicitly Aristotelian dramaturgical model for understanding how dream narratives appear and operate within the psyche. He states that dreams have a four-fold, specifically "dramatic" structure (Jung, 1969). The first phase, the *exposition*, sets up the initial scene, place, protagonists involved and situation of the dream. The second part he calls the *development* of the plot. Tension builds and the situation becomes more complicated. For the third section, he uses Aristotle's own dramatic term, the *peripeteia*. The dream situation *culminates* in a decisive happening, or it changes or reverses completely. The fourth and last phase, the *solution* or *result* produced by the dream itself and sought by the dreamer, is the dream's conclusion, finale, or *dénouement*, the 'untying of the knot.' Jung calls this final part and situation of the dream, the *lysis*. *Lysis, lysios*. Dionysos *Lysios*, the loosener and releaser finally appears at the end of our dreams.

For both Freud and Jung, however, there is one major class of exceptions to this orderly flow of representations which seek to reach dramatically satisfying results in dreams. There are, in fact, certain dream narratives which do not reach an

end at all. They explode in the face of beliefs and expectations that dreams even have a lysis, or an end, desired by the dreamer. These are traumatic dreams, anxiety dreams, and nightmares, dreams where there is no lysis; interrupted, frightening dreams which do not end until they wake *us* up, or we rouse ourselves, oftentimes sweating, with beating heart and accelerated pulse. These dreams forcefully disrupt and disturb both dreaming and sleeping. They jolt the entire sleep and dream cycle. Their powerful affect and emotional charge cannot be bound by the dreamwork, or by the dreamer's usual defenses and needs to maintain the state of sleep. Dionysos *Lysios* is not allowed to appear.

What we do see irrupting so dramatically in traumatic dreams, and perhaps to some extent in all dreams, is the primary manifestation of Dionysos *Mainomenos*, the 'mad' god, the 'raving one.' Madness itself makes its appearance. The dark side of Dionysos, neglected, dishonored and dis-owned, now for millennia, is forcefully revealed. Although somewhat transformed by Apollonian artifice into a series of generally ordered representations, their rough edges relatively smoothed over by successful dreamwork, these visitations of the night may still easily burst apart, leaving us to peer aghast into a deep Dionysiac abyss. The divine child, innocently playing, becomes threatened with obliteration. That oscillation between Apollonian appearances and Dionysiac terrors, between what Freud called the manifest dream and its affectively-powerful latent content, constitutes the twinned dynamic poles of all psychological life, in dreams and in waking. The nocturnal *enantiodromia* between the creation of form and its de-creation into formlessness plays out in dreams in the same Dionysian way as it does in tragic drama, and in deep analytical processes.

It is the work of dream interpretation and psychoanalysis in general, to seek to release the Dionysiac energies bound up and contained by unconscious representations, symptoms, symbols, conflicts and complexes. This loosening *is* the work of analysis. This is a process and experience that takes place, however, like the presentations of both dream and tragedy, through confrontation, dissonance, dis-solution and regressive dis-integration. The analytical situation presents a theatre essentially for staging the performances of Dionysos *Mainomenos.* The mad god needs to appear. The *telos* of dreams, their 'aim' or 'goal,' and deepest desire, is not to create the pleasurable satisfaction of wish fulfillment. It is rather that through the appearance of *mainomenos*, the upsurge of unconscious emotion and libidinal energy that the dream presents, that we may make space for *lysios*, the loosening of soul and the liberation from the tyranny and terror of the conflicts and complexes that bind us. The appearances of Dionysos, both *Mainomenos* and *Lysios*, in analysis and in dreams, take us way beyond the pleasure principle. It is not pleasure that we strive for in dreams, or in art, or in life for that matter, but

freedom. The *telos* of the soul is *lysios*, the enhanced capacity and experience of moving closer to, and with, the spontaneous rhythms of living nature.

In analysis, the focus substantially shifts with this alternative and de-centered stance, from what images and dreams *mean*, their symbols, interpretations, amplifications and conceptualizations, to what dreams *do*. The project of analysis, like dreams, tragedy and sublime art, is not to create new images, symbols or representations, but instead to problematize the very activities of reference and representation themselves.

Analysis and art, tragedy and dreams, seek to first interrupt, radically dis-rupt, and then totally transform our basic representational subjectivity. Rather than conceptualizing meaning, understanding, ideas or insights, these Dionysiac modalities perform, release, and let loose their already overdetermined meanings. As vehicles for the appearances of Dionysos, these forms not only present *mania*, madness, on both the inner and outer stages, they produce and create madness. First *mainomenos*, then *lysios*.

Analysis, tragedy and dreams stage the dis-articulation, de-construction and dis-organization, not only of the spectator, the spectacle, and of the spectacular relationship itself, they also rupture and smash the specular and speculative nature of the whole enterprise. The entire 'ocularocentric' (Jay, 1993), or visually-oriented stance of the subject gets shattered. They stage the death of representation as *mimesis*, the death of representation as the 'imitation' of nature and/or of life. This postmodern, sublime, or Dionysiac art and analysis is unwilling to accept imitations.

In his prose *Remarks* on the translation of Sophocles' *Oedipus*, the poet Hölderlin, delineating the quintessence of Greek tragedy, writes:

> For the tragic *transport* is properly empty and the most unbound. Whereby, in the rhythmic succession of representations, in which the *transport* presents itself, *what in (poetic) meter is called the caesura*, the pure word, the counter-rhythmic intrusion, becomes necessary in order to meet the racing alternation of representations at its culmination, such that what appears then is no longer the alternation of representations but representation itself. (Hölderlin in Lacoue-Labarthe, 1989, p. 234)

With this necessary explosion both of representations and of the spectacle, we have come very far indeed from Aristotle, and perhaps from Freud and Jung as well. There is no longer a *polis*, a catharsis, or even a satisfying or soothing representation. Nothing remains. Everything is changed. Nothing can stay the same. Dionysiac art and analysis does not allow itself the consolation of representation, but rather strives instead to present and put 'forward the unpresentable in presentation itself' (Lyotard, 1984, p. 81). It 'denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to

share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable' (ibid.). All ways of viewing, experiencing and framing spectacle, whether in the '*disreal*' (Lyotard, 1989, p. 156) spaces of temple, church, theatre, sports stadium, television, computer or video screen, cinema, museum, or consulting room, are all destroyed, obliterated.

As subjects of desire and images, in thrall to illusion and to all the multiply mediated and highly simulated versions of constructed reality surrounding us, we forget that we live within a theatre of representations, within images of images. Dionysiac practices, contrary to imitating, repeating, or re-presenting images, illusions, or appearances, seek instead to create 'new presentations, not in order to enjoy them, but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable' (Lyotard, 1984, p. 81). 'We need,' according to Kristeva,

> to come as close as possible to the crisis, to accompany it and produce individual works, because that is the predicament we are in, in a kind of pulverization and solitude. (Kristeva, 1995, p. 27)

She says further, that:

> We need to maintain a state of duality-on one side the most violet fragmentation and abjection, on the other, in the background a (continuous) inquiring into the state of the world. (ibid., p. 25)

We must walk a fine line between the terrors of annihilation and despair, and the constant, circumspect probing and questioning of our situations.

Attempting to interrogate and name this catastrophe and cataclysm we are currently living, 'we are drawn,' Maurice Blanchot writes,

> by too strong a movement, into a space where truth lacks, where limits have disappeared, where we are delivered to the immeasurable. And yet it is there that we are required to maintain an even step, not to lose a sense of proportion and to seek a true language by going all the way down into the deep of error. (Blanchot 1982, p. 184)

Naming, and the attempts to name the god who is to come originate for Kristeva, in the place/space of the *chora*, in the union of subject and predicate, and subject and object. It is the matrix and source for all names and naming, and 'a *replacement*,' she says, 'for what the speaker perceives as an archaic mother' (Kristeva, 1980, p. 291). Lodging into pictorial, verbal, or any other kind of language, the experience of our own instinctual and signifying resources, the modality of our earliest identification with the maternally protective and nurturing space of the *chora*, the artist and analyst attempt to produce a specific *jouissance* that traverses 'both sign and object' (ibid., p. 242). This effort also entails, according to Hölderlin, the 'reversal of all modes and forms of representation'

(Hölderlin in Santner, 2006, p. 94). It produces, establishes and relates with singularities, *a* singularity, the inviolable singularity and irreplaceability of the other.

It is the *telos* of Dionysiac art and analysis to break through primary narcissism and primal repression, to open up and penetrate to an archaic maternal area, and thereby 'arrive at the space of fundamental unrepresentability towards which all glances nonetheless converge' (Kristeva, 1980, p. 249). This is the beatific paradox: that it is '*the space of fundamental unrepresentability towards which all glances nonetheless converge*.' In this space, which is at least as much outside of us and in the world, in *physis* and in matter, as it is inside of us, in *psyche*, we are not only attempting to see and speak what we are seeing, but we are at the same time being seen and hearing our own name, our proper name, being spoken, or murmured, however softly or loudly.

Yet feeling so acutely and overwhelmingly for the most part, the *lack* of presence, however, the absence, loss and even death of signification, or of 'god,' turns our usual and everyday namelessness at least into something we can, and indeed must, attempt to both mourn and name. Hölderlin's "poetic courage," Eric Santner says, 'is his capacity to truly dwell within this condition, to freely register the impact of the lack of "*heilige Namen*" *without* thereby positing a death of God' (Santner, 2001, p. 44).

Hölderlin's *poiesis* watches over, preserves and safeguards this absence of meaning. This most particular and painfully obvious aspect of our human condition, Kristeva refers to as the crisis of our 'abjection.' We live in a state in which we are truly neither subject nor object. She points instead to this experiential uncertainty of our 'ab-jection,' to the fact that we are 'ab-ject,' thrown beside ourselves, and must therefore learn how to move in this space in-between. Embracing our *lack* of presence requires that we move even further into realms of *différence*, not-self, not-identity, into dizzying states of dis-integration. In this place where things are unfinished and unresolved, the self apprehended as neither subject nor object, borders, boundaries, rules and edges fall away. We cannot so easily own, appropriate, identify with, or become this or that thing, idea, image, event, symbol, thought or person, without at the same time, becoming its other-which itself then also immediately drops off into nothingness and emptiness. Paradoxically, it is that radical nothingness or void which is our soul/sole ground. It is precisely just *this* vertiginously shifting inner earth in which we must plant and tend psyche, soul. It is our only ground, the true hopeful *topos* where we may become human. Rainer Maria Rilke writes in his *Sonnets to Orpheus* (II, 13):

> Be-and at the same time know the condition
> of not-being, the infinite ground of your deep vibration,
> that you may fully fulfill it this single time. (Rilke, 1942, p. 95)

As 'ab-ject,' we are of necessity exposed to, and still bound to contain all of the opposites, all of the warring dualities of our riven nature, despair and hope, anguish and rapture, but in *different* ways than before. Our distinguished sovereignty, as readers and writers, spectators and actors, artists and viewers, analysts and analysands, as distant interpreters of the world and life in general, must become completely disrupted and ruptured by the continuous shocks of discontinuity we are constantly experiencing in our inner and outer environments. The time of the world must come to an end and change. We are ready, waiting and preparing for the god to come. 'That we know not how to name what awaits us,' Lyotard writes, 'is the sure sign that it awaits us' (Lyotard in Rajchman, 1985, p. 112).

In his famous poem, 'Archaic Torso of Apollo' (1908), Rilke ends with perhaps the most powerful psychological imperative of the twentieth century: '*Du musst dein Leben ändern*,' literally, 'You must make your life other-ed,' or, 'You must change your life' (Rilke, 1989, p. 60-1). In the penultimate line of that poem, however, in which he is writing of the inner brilliance and dazzling, gleaming light of the sculpted stone, turned like a lamp to an incandescent glow and gaze within the magnificent, fragmented, Hellenistic marble statue of a great rippling muscular torso, 'the translucent cascade of the shoulders' glistening 'like a wild beast's fur,' bursting 'like a star'… 'from all the borders of itself,' he states: 'for here there is no place that does not see you' (ibid). This marvelous marble sculpture sees *us*; it is always looking out at *us*, whether we are there or not. The world is always looking at us-from within its own ensouled gaze-and will continue to look out, even long after we will be gone. 'For here,' in this place of fullness, in the presence of *it all*, Rilke says, 'there is no place that does not see you.' With this phrase, Rilke opens to an infinitely 'new field and logic of encounter,' to:

> a new *Werkästhetik*, and a new mode of encounter – a new way of being submitted to the (now dispersed, "serialized") gaze of the object – correlative to it. (Santner 2006, p. 205)

We are thrown once again out of ourselves, into the world, *ek-stasis*, standing outside, possessed by the god of otherness, who seduces us and changes our minds. Dionysos makes us lose our 'own' minds. It is only as 'ab-ject,' flung outside, into the 'other,' when we are beside ourselves, that we pass from suffering to joy, from absence into the presence of both word and world, beckoned by the other into language, the repository of soul. It is the 'other' that we seek, the 'other' that names us, that calls us by our proper name, that gives us our voice and voices itself through us. Though it happens only once, it continues to always happen. We are continuously being called out of our selves into the world, into the 'otherness' of

the world. It is thus, that at least since the initial sparks of consciousness were struck into life, that we and the world *are* en-souled.

Lyotard writes:

> There can be no work of art if the seer and the seen do not hold one another in an embrace, if the immanence of one for the other is not manifested and glorified, if the visual organization does not make us feel that our gaze has been seen and that the object is watching. (Lyotard, 1989, p. 224)

In allowing ourselves to be solicited by the gaze of the other that resides in exteriority, we risk collapse and submit joyfully to our own de-centered, dis-appropriated, dis-membered Dionysiac gaze, the loosened looking of psyche's analysis. Dispersed and disseminated throughout this world, our gaze is reciprocally returned to us from every 'other,' and from every thing. There is no place, space, aspect or detail which does not see us, which does not speak to us, and to which we 'are not called upon to respond' (Santner, 2006, p. 206).

Works Cited

Adams, T. (1997). Psychoanalytic framing of the sublime in the creative act. In P. Clarkson (Ed.). *On the sublime in psychoanalysis, archetypal psychology and psychotherapy*. London: Whurr Publishers Ltd., 69-84.

Agamben G. (1999). *The man without content*. G. Albert (Trans.). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Aristotle (1958). *On poetry and style*. G.M.A. Grube (Trans. and Intro.). Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc.

Blanchot, M. (1982). *The space of literature*. A. Smock (Trans.). Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska.

Hölderlin, F. (1972). *Friedrich Hölderlin, Eduard Morike, Selected Poems*. C. Middleton (Intro. And Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jay, M. (1993). *Downcast eyes*. Berkeley: University of California.

Jung, C. G. (1969). On the nature of dreams. In *The structure and dynamics of the psyche.* CW: V. 8, Bollingen series XX. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 281-300.

Kristeva, J. (1980). *Desire in language*. L.S. Roudiez (Trans. and Ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.

____. (1995). Of word and flesh. In *Rites of passage: Art for the end of the century*. S. Morgan and F. Morris (Eds.). London: Tate Gallery Publications, 21-27.

Lacoue-Labarthe, P. (1989). *Typography. mimesis. philosophy. politics*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.

_____ and Nancy, J.L. (1996). Scene: an exchange of letters. In *Beyond representation. Philosophy and poetic imagination.* R. Eldridge (Ed.). Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 273-302.

Lyotard, J.F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. G. Bennington and B. Massumi (Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

_____. (1989). *The Lyotard reader*. A. Benjamin (Ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Miller, D.L. (1990). An other Jung and an other… In K. Barnaby and P. D'Acierno (Eds.). *C.G. Jung and the humanities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 325-30.

Nietzsche, F. (1967). *The birth of tragedy*. W. Kauffmann (Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.

Rajchman, J. (1985). The post-modern museum. In *Art in America*, No. 10, (October). New York: Brant Art Publications Inc., 110-117.

Rilke, R.M. (1942). *Sonnets to Orpheus*. M.D.H. Norton (Trans.). New York: W.W. Norton and Co.

____. (1989). *The selected poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*. S. Mitchell (Ed. and Trans.). New York: Vintage.

Santner, E.L. (2001). *On the psychotheology of everyday life. Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

____. (2006). *On creaturely life: Rilke/Benjamin/Sebald*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.