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**A PSYCHODYNAMIC EXPLORATION OF THE
ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLETION
OF AN ARTWORK**

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF
THE HIGHER DIPLOMA IN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY**

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DATE: MAY 1ST 2018

Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Abstract	2
1 Introduction	3
2 Origins	5
2.1 Loss of the Infant	5
2.2 From Admiration to Fatigue for Freud	6
2.3 Sublimation	7
2.4 Thanatos	8
2.6 Towards Object Usage	9
3 Development	11
3.1 Destruction and Restoration in Art	11
3.2 Ugliness and Beauty	12
3.3 Destruction in Contemporary Art	13
4 Union	15
4.1 Encouragement of Fusion	15
4.2 Facilitating Merging and Re-emerging	16
5 Separation	18
5.1 Loss of the Artist	18
5.2 Failure and Repetition	19
6 Conclusion	21
References	22

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors Cathal O’Keefe and Dr Grainne Donohue for their continued support, guidance and wisdom during the process of this literature review.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my family and dear friend Ronan for their unerring understanding over the process of this paper’s production.

I wish to offer heartfelt gratitude to kind friend Áine Doyle for her time, encouragement, and her genuine and thoughtful engagement with my ramblings.

Abstract

One of the fundamental building blocks of psychodynamic psychology is the idea that deep down in our psyche we harbour uncomfortable and repulsive unconscious desires which originate in childhood. However, the majority of humankind does not act on these wishes and instead acts in ways that are not only socially acceptable but which are frequently constructive and aesthetically pleasing. These primeval urges have their origins in early childhood according to thinkers like Melanie Klein (1929) and Sigmund Freud (1923) amongst others. According to such psychodynamic theorists, the frustrations originating in childhood never completely subside. However, in the reconciliation of these dissatisfactions, the resulting energy can be transformed into the undertaking of creative endeavours. Though we are ultimately fated not to get what we want in early childhood, these desires may find a substitute in various creative modes of jouissance.

1 Introduction

This literature review aims to explore the artistic process from a psychodynamic viewpoint. It covers the journey of the creative endeavour from its origin and development through to its completion and publication. This paper outlines how the cultural experience in adulthood is rooted in the early efforts of the infant to make sense of its surrounding world. The psychodynamic field of psychoanalysis studies underlying drives in human behaviour originating in early childhood and thus is a significant body to consider when researching the origins of creative desires, the external expression of the self-other relationship and the predominant theme of object-loss.

The relationship between psychodynamic theory and the artistic process has been widely discussed in the past and continues to be explored today. The ubiquitous names of psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, and Donald W. Winnicott are widely referenced in these explorations. Their ideas have been developed by numerous writers since, such as Hanna Segal, Marion Milner, and Patricia Townsend, as well as many others which are encountered in this paper. Therefore the topic for this research is well-represented and widely discussed in psychoanalytic literature. Nonetheless there are areas which require greater clarity, particularly around the topic of some contemporary movements in art.

As psychodynamic theory has developed over the past century, so too has its thinking around the artistic process, and these developments and conflicting ideas are shown by this review. The course of this paper follows the artistic stages of genesis, development and separation which are proposed by Townsend (2015). The review begins by discussing the origins of the artistic process in the psyche, before it moves on to exploring the aesthetic development of this material in the studio and finally culminates by examining the eventual separation of artist and artwork. Throughout these stages, the paper continually draws parallels

between this creative process and the expression of the self-other relationship in early infantile development.

2 Origins

2.1 Loss of the Infant

For Freud, art originates in the life force Eros, an instinct which converts disturbing, aggressive, libidinal urges into more socially valued activities (Jones, 2010). These pursuits provide an outlet for culturally unacceptable or personally unsettling desires. In *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud explores the fate of infantile sexual drives in whole and part objects in the outer world and depictions of objects in the inner world (Bradbury, 2001). Influenced by contemporary physiologist Ernst von Brücke, Freud suggests that libidinal energies which would otherwise be repressed, displaced or meet another defence mechanism are expressed symbolically in infancy and later are expressed by the artist in her medium (Freud, 1923).

Freud (1917) posits that we have lost someone or something in childhood and, in response to this loss, the child faces two possibilities: mourning and melancholia. Mourning will result in libidinal energy being decathected from the original love object and averted into a substitute (Bradbury, 2001). According to Freud (1917), this is the psychologically healthy development and is in contrast to the melancholic response which sees the subject denying the object-loss and clinging on to what Lacan (1959) later termed 'Das Ding'. Kristeva (1987) later literally translates this unnameable, formless void as a 'Thing' and describes it as a supreme good that is unrepresentable and beyond words, yet nonetheless clung on to in melancholia. The positions of mourning and melancholia are presented by Freud as somewhat black and white but, in the grey area that lies between, the opportunity for discovering a new reality exists.

The strong attaching emotions of love, hate and anger that bound the child to the primary object are eventually severed and, via the gradual release of cathartic energy, one journeys through the process of mourning. Freud (1917) suggests that this is achieved by finding a substitute object of love and by the engagement in other activities that satisfy the

release of this energy. Accordingly Freud paves the way for the development of Winnicott's (1971) idea of the transitional object. The emotional and energetic ties are decathected from the original object and find a new outlet in the external world.

2.2 From Admiration to Fatigue for Freud

Although Freud recognised the value of the child's creative endeavour to find a new solution, there is sometimes an air of scorn in his words when it comes to this behaviour in adulthood. At times it appears that he reduces the act to a regressive process that expresses repressed infantile drives towards the lost object. According to many commentators Freud repeatedly disparages artistic activities as no more than a reconciling defence mechanism "tending toward an illusory wish-fulfilling fantasy aimed at avoiding reality," (Jones, 2010).

Bollas (2011) contests the negative connotations to which this Freudian psychical regression alludes. In order to 'complement the theory of regression' Bollas (2011: 62) proposes its counterpart of reception where, in returning to previous infantile states, there is a possibility of coming to a new understanding 'without the intrusive effect of consciousness.' This process, which is explored later in this paper, is engaged with by the child in play and similarly by the artist in her medium. In this act, rather than a pathological repetition occurring, a new solution may be found (Townsend, 2014).

Freud receives much criticism for what is seen as his contempt for the artist. Critiques cite such quotes as 'They (artists) are given up to the pleasure principle,' (Freud and Jones, 1993, 8 Feb 1914) "My patience with pathological natures is exhausted in analysis. In art and life I am intolerant of them," (Freud, 1929: 196) and 'An artist is once more in rudiments an introvert not far removed from neurosis' (Freud, 1916-17: 376). However, this paper suggests that he is harshly condemned for looking at art as pathological, especially after his initial admiration for the artistic process. The issue with Freud's later writings on the subject may lie

in his propensity towards seeking out pathology in art. Regardless, the development of psychodynamic understanding in relation to the aesthetic process is the better for many of his ground-breaking theories, not least his initial idea that art was the sublimation of sexual desires arising in childhood (1905).

2.3 Sublimation

In the withdrawal of libidinal urges towards the original object, the child must come to terms with the loss of a container for these drives which originate in the id and arrive at a position where a new reality is explored. Freud (1923) claims that the child, and later the artist, converts these seemingly unacceptable urges to more socially appreciated activities. This defence mechanism is termed ‘sublimation’ by Freud, and serves the subject in offering an outlet in which neither reality nor pleasure are forsaken (Freud, 1916-17).

According to Freud, (1917:44) in sublimation the subject is holding on to a “hallucinatory wishful psychosis,” where the lost object still exists. This response of the melancholic is an attempt to identify with and to find once again the lost or abandoned object. It is this state of reality-avoidance that Freud occasionally uses to undermine aesthetic activity (Jones, 2010). According to Freud (1917), departure from this position of regressive denial is facilitated by the work of mourning where a substitute object receives and satisfies the release of redirected libidinal energy.

As this substitute-object itself is repeatedly replaced during the subject’s development, the process becomes more similar to the art of adulthood. While Freud (1914) compares such artistic creativity in adulthood as a surrender to the pleasure principle, ego psychologist Ernst Kris viewed a measured withdrawal towards the id as essential for the eventual output of meaningful art (Sayers, 2007). Whereas there is an element of symptomatic regression in Freud’s description of artistic endeavour, Kris (1952) saw this type of sublimation as a mature

defence mechanism. For him, the controlled and purposive regression of the ego could be used to encourage its adjustment to the environment.

2.4 Thanatos

While Freud primarily highlights the influence of repressed sexual desires of infancy in the formation of the creative urge (Jones, 2010), art is a primarily reparative process in Kleinian thinking which deals with the child's anxieties around the loss of the mother and the death drive (Abella, 2010). Through art and other works, the creator undertakes a process to find once again the lost object, i.e. the lost good mother. Segal (1964) writes that the urge to go about a creative task originates in mourning this object-loss. At the base of the creative drive is the restorative impulse to amend objects that have been lost, or destroyed in phantasy, by the child.

Whereas sublimation was the work of Eros for Freud, the destructive drive is central to Klein's thoughts around the origins of symbolism, creativity and play. Without destruction, there is no need for reparation and so it follows in Kleinian theory that there can be no art without Thanatos (Abella, 2010). Repression, displacement and sublimation guard against this innate aggressive drive and its affect, allowing the ego to grow stronger. Despite the intervention of these defence mechanisms, the potential for harmful wishes conjures up great guilt and shame in the infant. In order to cope with such uncomfortable drives and emotions, the subject undertakes reparative activities to be found in acts of symbolism. In an effort to 'spare the object' (Segal, 1964: 75), the subject displaces these strong feelings of hate and love onto substitutes, thus the beginning of symbol-formation.

2.5 Destruction in Phantasy

In psychodynamic theory, the early infant faces huge difficulty in coming to terms with the absence and presence of the primary caregiver. The realisation that omnipotence over the mother-object is an illusion is not one easily integrated and invariably comes as a shock (Winnicott, 1971). However, the provision of a good enough environment by the good enough mother caters for the child's coping with such a disturbance. In the gradually increasing awareness that the mother-figure exists and acts on external grounds, the child moves from a position of object-relating to object-usage. This transition is experienced as incredibly difficult and requires the child to place the object outside of its omnipotent control, an act which means 'the subject destroys the object' (Winnicott, 1969: 713). This move to a position where the object can be used rather than related to is essential in terms of the child's ability to make sense of its internal world through symbolisation. Though necessary in healthy childhood development according to Winnicott, the realisation of hateful and destructive capabilities towards the object conjures up strong feelings of guilt in the child. In Kleinian theory, this psychical discomfort gives rise to the impulse to repair and restore, efforts which find an outlet in Winnicott's transitional object.

2.6 Towards Object Usage

This move from object-relating to object-usage is turbulent and is facilitated by manipulation of the transitional object (Winnicott, 1971). This substitute, which stands for some part-object such as the breast, is an indicator that the infant is making sense of inner and outer objects and is coming to a place where it can tolerate similarities and differences, fantasy and fact, absence and presence (Winnicott, 1971: 6). Winnicott claims that the subject's interaction with the transitional object is the external representation of this internal process; it is part of both its

inner and outer reality. As the child grows, the transitional object itself becomes substituted and this process repeats, gradually becoming further removed from the original object. Over time, this intense experiencing of inner and outer world is felt and expressed in art and other creative forms in adulthood (Winnicott, 1971).

3 Development

3.1 Destruction and Restoration in Art

Writing about paintings by Ruth Kjär, Klein (1929) observes her artworks as expressions of inner childhood anxieties around the phantastical destruction of her mother's coupling with her father. Klein interprets a series of Kjär's paintings as moving from a fragmented representation of mother towards a beautifully restored portrait of her (Sayers, 2007). Though this can be seen as one person's subjective interpretation of an oeuvre, it does offer a concrete example of psychical restoration taking place in art.

Klein (1937) wrote of this reparative urge as a response to the malaise of holding the desire to destroy. Through symbolism, the subject may integrate these devastating infantile impulses in a more tolerable way. Psychoanalytic psychotherapist W.R.D. Fairbrain also sees art as a conflict between destruction and repair. In a passage echoing Picasso's famous quote "Every act of creation is first an act of destruction," Fairbrain (1938: 297) posits:

Since the chief source of inner tension is found to lie in the pressure of destructive urges, and since artistic activity both relieves this inner tension and is creative, we are justified in concluding that the principle of restitution is the governing principle in art.

For Fairbrain (1938), reparation is abundant in the art of Van Gogh where he sees the violence literally in his brush strokes in *Wheat Field with Cypresses*. Symbolic aggression seems to be omnipresent in Picasso's art too, notably in the fragmented representation of *The Woman with the Golden Breasts* where the image of a lady is largely unrecognisable at first. The art critic Robert Fry (1924) said of Cézanne that it was not for beauty that he painted, rather it was an act executed in order to 'work out his salvation.' However convincing, these interpretations only serve as second-hand subjective insights. This weakness in analysis repeats itself from Freud's (1910) examination of the art of Leonardo di Vinci to Klein's above scrutiny of Kjär's artworks.

Thankfully however, not only is it indirect interpretations of art that reveal its reparative nature, so too do some artists themselves. Of her painting entitled '*My Mother*', Marion Milner (1987) declared that she had created a 'restored self and a restored object'. An interviewee of Townsend (2014), simply labelled Artist 6, tells of how the wholesome characteristics of the creative process allow her to get to the bottom of something that she has not worked through quite yet. The production of an artwork in this manner allows the artist to mould an idea, which is at the outset unknown, into something of aesthetic quality. The notion of exploring an unknown is also mentioned by contemporary artist John Cage, who likens the action to casting out 'a net to catch fish the nature of which one does not know' (Abella, 2010). Though parallels are drawn here, it will later be seen how the above words of Fairbrain and the reparative theories of Klein and Segal fall short in understanding modern artistic endeavours.

3.2 Ugliness and Beauty

Segal proposes that, in its completion, art offers a huge opportunity for harmony and relief in dealing with and exploring an unknown internal anguish (Abella, 2010). Where French sculptor Rodin (1911) speaks of the aesthetic transformation from ugliness to beauty, Klein (1929) and Rickman (1940) equate the move from the fragmented view of the infantile paranoid-schizoid phase, to the ambivalence-tolerating depressive position. Segal (1952) also highlights the root of creative endeavour in the anxieties evoked by the early paranoid-schizoid split of good part-object and bad part-object. In reaching the depressive position, the child is now in the position to 'restore and repair the damaged object' in sublimation (Abella, 2010). The manipulation of an initial ugliness into something of aesthetic beauty, as described by Rodin, is an act of reparation and can only be truly known after "an acknowledgement of aggression and its effect," (Segal, 1991: 92). The restorative process facilitates a coming to terms with damages the child has imagined he has caused to the object (Abella, 2010). The creative endeavour

accommodates the integration of a new reality within and without the object, and thus the ego is strengthened in this action (Segal, 1952).

Segal continues to hypothesise that the extent to which the ego can tolerate this depressive position of holding aforementioned anxieties equates to the esteemed quality of the subject's symbolic expression (Abella, 2010). According to her, this a fundamental capacity to possess in order for the creative process to take place. Segal (1952) claims that this ability engages public interest through the work's potential to resonate with the overcoming of depressive anxieties in the audience. This is contrasting to Freud's (1914) suggestion that the artist awakens libidinal and unconscious workings in the receiver, and thus the work appeals to its audience. Segal (1952: 204) posits that 'there can be no aesthetic pleasure without [a] formal perfection' which facilitates the resolution of the audience's depressive malaise. Ugliness that survives in the completed work is deemed to be incomplete, fragmented, and connected with the paranoid-schizoid phase of development (Abella, 2010).

3.3 Destruction in Contemporary Art

Though ugliness and destruction are necessary factors in the creative process, following Kleinian theory they are only functional when they are in operation alongside beauty and restoration. It is here that this somewhat conservative¹ reparative outlook on aesthetic pleasure fails some contemporary works. While artists recently interviewed by Townsend (2014) support a restorative theory, Abella (2010) highlights a modern artistic move away from both Freud's² (1911) goal of communication and Segal's harmonic values towards works that detail 'either raw ugliness, violence and disorder or the insignificant, the accidental and ephemeral'

¹ Abella (2010) draws attention to the fact that, in their departure from Freudian thinking, early Kleinian theorists felt obliged to remain somewhat respectful to their predecessors in the psychoanalytic circle in order to avoid damaging conflict.

² "What the artist aims at is to awaken in us the same constellation as which in him produced the impetus to create," (Freud, 1911: 224)

(Abella, 2010). Numerous modern artists deliberately focus on portraying aggression or destruction rather than their resolution. Abella (2010) cites contemporary artists such as John Cage, Marcel Duchamp and Christian Boltanski as creators who have turned away from 'the tyranny of taste' (Cabanne, 1971: 43). All three artists mention their rejection of a wish to communicate, seeing this activity as pushy, alienating, overbearing and restrictive.

Where the thinking of Freud, Klein and Segal fail in predicting and explaining this contemporary approach, Abella (2012) turns to Bion's promotion of negative valence and self-transformation for a psychodynamic approach that compares to psychodynamic theory (O'Shaughnessy, 2005). Much like Segal, both Bion and John Cage encourage an openness to the unknown in different settings. However, they differ from the Kleinian school of thought in that they encourage a more lenient permission of what Bion called a 'pro-(e)vocative' mental attitude aimed at allowing the achievement of more authentic experiences and personal truth (Abella, 2012).

Abella (2010) endeavours to create this link between psychodynamic theory and the workings of some less harmonious contemporary art. However convincing she may be, she is but one voice on this relationship. As psychodynamic theory has developed from the time of Freud, Klein and Segal, so too has art and there appears to exist an opportunity to expand upon paralleling research and to relate it to the fundamental aspects of psychodynamics. Nonetheless, Segal's rational and cogent development of Klein's reparative theory remains highly important in the psychoanalytic understanding of art.

4 Union

4.1 Encouragement of Fusion

The Kleinian transition from paranoid-schizoid to depressive, like most psychoanalytic transitions, is not linear. The child may experience regressions in his departure from the pre-depressive stage, and Ernst Kris (1952) claims that it is a comparable regression of the ego which serves as a catalyst for artistic creation. In this move towards a pre-depressive merging with an ideal object, artists may find themselves experiencing a union with their medium. Townsend (2015) speaks of Milner's experience of fusion with the artwork, a process of becoming one with her medium. For the artist, this sense of oneness is an essential catalyst in meaningful creative process, without which the inner world would not be communicated with the audience. Several artists echo Milner's (1957) necessity for merging. Townsend (2014) interviews numerous artists who describe this developmental stage of the artistic process as consuming. Sculptor George Meyrick declares that "You're right in it... You're buried in what you're doing." John Aiken describes being "...totally absorbed in something," and Artist 6 passionately illustrates the feeling of "...being absolutely overwhelmed by something and being overwhelmed by the feeling you're going to just disappear altogether," (Townsend, 2014: 107-109). One is reminded of Winnicott's (1971: 13) description of the small child being 'lost' in play.

Milner (1969) describes the alluring immersive nature of the creative process, an engagement which mirrors an object-relational regression towards union with the other and a loss of one's own separate identity. Where Lacan discouraged this type of illusory oneness with the other in a psychoanalytic setting (Sayers, 2007), Milner approved of this relationship between artist and medium in the studio, deeming it a necessary pre-cursor to sense of twoness or separation (Townsend, 2014). The painter and psychoanalyst explains that the artist can

experience a moment of the inner and outer world coinciding in engagement of this ‘as-if-ness’ through the manipulation of her chosen medium (Milner, 1957: 131).

4.2 Facilitating Merging and Re-emerging

Ehrenzweig (1967) describes the ability to alternate between states of oneness and separation with the artwork as a smooth oscillation between focused and unfocused perception. This interchange of positions allows the artist to reflect upon and critically analyse their work after periods of deep engagement. For many artists, this boundary is made available either physically by their studio, or by going through mental routines linked with the creative process (Townsend, 2014). The setting up of this physical or mental space allows for ideas to develop, much like the provision of potential or transitional space by the mother facilitates the development of the child (Winnicott, 1965).

Not only is the artist in a position of being facilitated, but she is also the facilitator for the development of the artwork. The artist is teetering between being immersed in a state of oneness with her creation and acting as its environment-mother. This oscillating dyadic relationship is tricky to navigate but, if successful, the artist will eventually accomplish a satisfactory work (Rickman, 1940).

Rotenberg (1988) also speaks of the artist’s variable level of interaction with her work. If she creates from an under-distanced position where an excessive union is in operation, the symbols become private and unintelligible to others and even to a reflective self (Kris, 1952). On the contrary, an artwork created from an over-distanced position will come across as cold and cerebral.

As the baby needs to experience its mother as separate in order to discover its fantasies (Sayers 2007) similarly, for meaningful creation to occur, the artist must re-emerge intermittently, and eventually totally, from the state of absorption. Freud (1911: 224) maintained that the artist has the ability to return to reality from a ‘world of phantasy’. Segal

(1952: 203) develops this idea by claiming that the artist does not in fact depart from reality but 'can in all consciousness use the material to express the phantasy.' Rotenberg (1988) too elaborates on Freud's initial stance, declaring that this temporary loss of self does not represent an unregulated loss of boundaries. Instead, he relates this parallel experiencing as a transient coextensiveness, where the artist can effectively manage the interaction of union and disunion (Rotenberg, 1988). Thus, the artist may enter into a relationship with her medium where a union is experienced but a sense of otherness is adequately acknowledged, similar to the depressive position undertaken by the infant in relation to his mother.

5 Separation

5.1 Loss of the Artist

Having developed the work sufficiently the artist has reached the ‘separation’ stage in the work’s release to an audience (Townsend: 2014). The artwork in many ways takes on a life of its own, perhaps in its exhibition beyond the control of its creator, in the way an audience interacts with it or in the way that it changes itself in its physicality. Once published, the relationship between the artist and artwork is in existence at a much greater distance. The artist is no longer ‘in’ the artwork, and the artwork similarly no longer exists in and for the artist alone. The separation phase and the preceding phenomenon of fusion highlight the complexity of the psychodynamic relationship between the creator and her work. At times the artist compares to the object, at other times she compares to the subject. While there are convincing parallels between object-mother and artist–artwork relationships, there is an ambiguity surrounding the positions taken up by both parties due to the oscillating nature of their interaction.

According to Matisse, the development process comes to an end ‘when [the work] expresses emotion as completely as possible’ (Cited in Hagman, 2000: 277). The restoration of the object is complete in this moment, and the work, ready for publication, ‘assumes independent existence and “otherness,”’ (Ehrenzweig, 1967). Artists describe their work not needing them to do anything anymore and the process being like the severing of an umbilical cord, saying ‘They (artworks) are my children you know, and I have to cut it,’ (Bobell, in Townsend 2014: 113). This painful aspect of the separation stage is sensed as a loss, one reminiscent of the dissipation of the early mother-child relationship. The artist, like the infant, must come to the realisation that she is no longer omnipotent over the work. This belief must

be relinquished by the artist in order to relate to it as something outside of herself, ‘an independent thing,’ (Tabernacle, in Townsend 2014: 114).

This process though, like in infancy, is neither linear nor immediate, sometimes delayed due to the realities of its exhibition, sometimes delayed because of the wish of the artist not to ‘return to the real world of being separate’ from the work (Milner, 1957: 37). The artist’s separation from its work echoes the severance described by Freud in childhood as slow and gradual ‘so slow and gradual that by the time it has been finished the expenditure of energy necessary for it is also dissipated,’ (Freud, 1917: 255). Hagman also mentions a similar phenomenon in the eventual fading of aesthetic resonance and oneness with the artwork. An experience of transcendence remains in memory, one that ‘must be reengaged’ in another project after completion of a previous one (Hagman, 2000: 277).

5.2 Failure and Repetition

Not only is the artist losing the experience of working physically with her medium, but she is also experiencing the loss of that momentary achievement of restored self and restored object (Milner, 1987: 130). This glimpse at wholeness is fleeting, and becomes an addictive prospect, where the artist repeatedly seeks out the object’s restoration and failure (Kohut, 1966). However, this cyclical reparative process is mostly felt as a failure ‘in accordance with the phantastic character of the whole position, [and] is nearly always of a quite unpractical and unrealizable nature,’ Klein (1935: 278). Satisfaction with a completed artwork is frequently ephemeral (Hagman, 2000) and sentiments of disownment or wishes for its annihilation are often felt by its creator. The destructive feelings that ignited the creative spark at the very beginning are present again here at the end. The artist is compelled to search over and over for ‘the experience of heightened, lost, and regained self-experience’ (Hagman, 2000: 277). For Hagman, in creation the artist triumphs over the inescapable allure of the self-object failure and

the vulnerability of self-experience. This is not the case in Freud's more convincing view, who sees this allure as unconquerable and the search as implausible; the artist 'knows whom he has lost, but not what he has lost in him,' (1917: 244). Lacan (1959-60) too would suggest that this search for Das Ding, an elusive and formless void courtesy of the human condition, is unachievable. For Winnicott (1971: 55), this search via creativity ultimately 'never heals the underlying lack of sense of self.'

6 Conclusion

This paper outlines the parallels of the early relational experiences of the infant and the relationship between an artist and her artwork. It attempts to view this comparison through a psychodynamic lens in that the infant's move towards separation from the mother-object mirrors that of the artwork's eventual departure from the artist. The creator conceives of an idea, fosters its development and eventually comes to a place where it stands back to allow it to have a life of its own.

Though highlighting the many areas of similarity, this paper suggests that psychodynamic theory does not always fit the artistic process so ideally. With contemporary art moving further away from traditional aesthetic approaches, so too does it depart from its ties with traditional psychodynamic theories. Further to this limitation, throughout this paper it is suggested that the artist and artwork often oscillate between positions of mother and object respectively. Frequently there is no obvious line separating each party and thus a haziness may cloud the theoretical comparison to child-mother relationship. Nevertheless, psychodynamic theory presented by Klein and Segal and more recently by Abella and Townsend present convincing and logical explanations on the origin of the creative process, how it unfolds and how this artistic activity largely relates to the way the infant learns to relate to and make sense of his early surroundings.

In researching this topic, not only were there numerous comparisons between art-artist and child-mother relationships, there was copious literature paralleling the creative process to the work of the analyst and analysand in the psychoanalytic setting. Psychoanalysis, like art, possesses the potential to bring unconscious workings closer to a level of consciousness in a setting where the analyst acts as facilitator for such psychic activity to flourish. A more substantial study in relation to this comparison is enticing and could use, as a starting point, the works of Sayers (2007), Sabbadini (2012) and Townsend (2015).

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