

GARY D. ASTRACHAN

Dionysos. Lysios. Mainomenos: Performing Ecstasy and Madness in the Practices of Art and Analysis

In tracing the trajectory of tragic drama from its primordial origins in the earliest Attic, socio-political and theatrical rituals of Dionysiac mythology, through the Judaeo-Christian tradition, into its individual-psychological enactments in the context of the consulting room, we will attempt to discern and delineate its guiding impetus as the performative powers of *poiesis*. *Poiesis*, that resonant word from the ancient Greeks which gives us our poetry, poetics and poetizing, basically means making, doing, creating and producing, 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*'. This compelling mission of totally transfiguring our own representational subjectivity, as well as the natural world, is the shared project of both sublime artistic and postmodern psychoanalytic endeavor.

Along with the shaping of all of our dominant collective modalities of thinking, feeling, viewing and experiencing, Western culture and civilization has also increasingly proliferated the globally destructive ideologies of techno-scientific imperialism, colonialism, industrialization, urbanization and limitless consumerism. In this shadow of cataclysm and catastrophe, how do we acknowledge the obvious decline and failure of this modernist world view, while continuing to accompany the crisis and produce works which attempt to present the unrepresentable and name what may be essentially unnameable?

This presentation will include a slide-show, audio taped music and reading performance.

Gary D. Astrachan, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and Jungian analyst in private practice in Portland, Maine. He is a faculty member and supervising and training analyst at the C.G.Jung Institute in Boston and lectures and teaches widely throughout North America and Europe. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles in professional journals and books and writes particularly on the relationship between analytical psychology and Greek mythology, poetry, painting, film, postmodernism and critical theory.