

**Individuation as Spiritual Process: Jung's Archetypal Psychology  
and the Development of Teachers**

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**“...The spirit has its homeland, which is the realm of the meaning of things...**

**-Saint Exupéry  
The Wisdom of the Sands**

In the mid-1970s, curriculum theorist James Macdonald, in his discussion of various ideologies of education, proposed a category that he called the “transcendental developmental ideology.” This perspective would correct what he thought was the limiting, materialist focus of the radical or political view of education, which he considered a “hierarchical historical view that has outlived its usefulness both in terms of the emerging structure of the environment and of the psyches of people today” (Macdonald 1995, 73). The transcendental developmental ideology would embrace progressive and radical social values, according to Macdonald, but would be rooted in a deep spiritual awareness. Drawing upon the work of M.C. Richards (1989), he used the term “centering” to signify this form of consciousness. Macdonald termed his methodology of development a “dual dialectic,” a praxis involving reflective transaction between the individual ego and the inward subjective depths of the self, as well as between the ego and the outer objective structures of the environment. This method grew out of his critique of existing developmental theories (see Kohlberg and Mayer, 1972), which he thought neglected one or another aspect of this praxis, thus failing to take into account the full dimension of human “being.”

Macdonald was influenced by the work of C.G. Jung, the Swiss psychologist who first proposed the still controversial idea of the “collective unconscious.” Jung’s ideas, while undergoing an important critique and revision, especially among feminist scholars (Ruether 1983; Daly 1978; Lauter and Rupprecht 1985; Wehr 1987; Goldenberg 1989;

Christ 1977), are experiencing a resurgence. Despite the cultural and gendered biases in much of his work, I believe that the discussion of Jung's psychological concepts can contribute to the discussion of spirituality in education for a number of reasons. First, he developed one of the few psychological frameworks that take into account the transpersonal and the cosmological dimensions of human experience, as well as the usual affective, cognitive, and somatic domains. For the purposes of this paper, I am defining transpersonal as that which is concerned with ultimate capacities and potentialities which have no systematic place in dominant contemporary psychology (Tageson 1982) and cosmological as the interrelatedness and interconnectedness between the various domains of the universe and human experience (Donald Oliver describes a cosmologist as "an artist working on the adequacy, comprehensiveness, and coherence of his or her own meaning system" [1989, 57]). Second, Jung's emphasis on the reality and importance of our deepest spiritual questions, as well as on the intuitive and non-rational aspects of existence, present an insistent corrective to a prevalent Western materialism. Third, Jungian psychology illuminates the Latin root of the word education (*educere: to draw out*) by describing a developmental process based on the drawing out and incorporation of unconscious psychological material into consciousness. Fourth, it provides a bridge between psychological and social explanations of human behavior with its inclusion of both individual and collective elements. Last, Jung's own investigative process provides a model of inquiry consistent with current qualitative research criteria, in that he saw himself and his own subjective responses as a primary constituent in the research process. In Macdonald's words,

He is perhaps a modern paradigm of man's unified struggle for meaning, using his

own personality and culture and methodologically disciplining that inner struggle and cultural potential to probe the nature of human being. (Macdonald 1995, 81)

In this paper, I examine some of the significant aspects of Jung's analytical psychology, especially those that relate to spirituality, and clarify some distinctions that he drew between religion and spirituality. At the core of his psychology is the individuation process, which MacDonald refers to as the movement "toward the integration of inner and outer realities in a meaningful wholeness" (Macdonald 1995, 82). I will present a rationale for attending to the individuation process in work with both pre-service and in-service teachers. This is not to invoke a therapeutic approach to teacher education, but rather to expand the boundaries of conventional thinking about the professional development of teachers.

### **Jung's Structural Model of the Psyche**

In *Women Who Run With the Wolves* (1992), Clarissa Estés, a contemporary psychoanalyst and storyteller, introduces us to the mythic entity "La Loba," an archetypal personification of the 'old wise woman beyond time' who stands between the worlds of mythos and rationality and mediates between the chthonic realm of the psyche and the 'upper world' of the ego. Jung termed the locus between the worlds represented by La Loba the "psychoid unconscious" and considered it "a place where the biological and the psychological share headwaters, where biology and psychology might mingle with and influence one another" (in Estés 31). In more poetic terms, Estés describes this mythic dimension as "the place of the mist beings where things are and are not yet, where shadows have substance and substance is sheer" (30). In Jung's topography of consciousness the La Loba archetype occupies central role in the dialectic between the

conscious mind and the unconscious, forging a dynamic link between the social self, or “persona” and the subterranean streams of desire, dream, prehension, fantasy, and imagination. This conversation between the various layers of the psyche, which Jung documented in many of his patients long after they were “cured” in the ordinary sense of the word, will be described at some length later in the paper.

Jung was at one time an avid student of Freud’s work, then later an enthusiastic colleague and supporter of his ideas. In the beginning of their association, Jung was a respectable member of the European psychiatric establishment, while Freud was suspect for his highly speculative ideas (Singer 1973). A decade later, Freud was recognized as a giant in the world of psychology, Jung was dismissed as a speculative philosopher, and their relationship had disintegrated. The split occurred largely as a result of Jung’s most original and still controversial discovery—the collective unconscious. Whereas Freud viewed the unconscious primarily as a dark repository of suppressed infantile sexual urges, Jung came to understand it as a vast and fertile reservoir of archaic images and primal impulses, “a kind of infinite area within man, a spaceless space...more primal, more archaic, more primordial still than materiality” (Progoff 1973, 166). This aspect of the psyche has remained elusive to reductive analysis because it is, for the most part, out of reach of intellectual formulations. Jung acknowledged the difficulty of apprehending the totality of psychic experience through the intellect and recognized that he had tapped into an area of human experience with which science was largely unequipped to deal:

The individual imagines that he has caught the psyche and holds her in the hollow of his hand...He is even making a science of her in the absurd

supposition that the intellect, which is but a part and function of the psyche, is sufficient to comprehend the much greater whole (Singer 1973, 371).

This “infinite area” or “spaceless space” is what mystics have traditionally referred to as the “ground of being” (the totality of psychic experience). Allusions to this principle are found in the collection of traditions termed by Leibniz the “*philosophia perennis*” (perennial philosophy) which contains the historical record of eastern and western mystical experience (Huxley 1944). Some of the most systematic empirical investigations into this realm of experience are found in the analysis of dreams begun by Jung in the early part of the century and carried on by analysts of that tradition. The huge quantity of data gathered by Jung during his many years of investigation revealed certain consistent aspects of consciousness.

The structure of the psyche deduced by Jung can best be imagined with the help of a visual image. If we can imagine the collective unconscious (the inherited psychic substratum, perhaps related to DNA, that exists prior to personal experience) as the ocean; the ego (defined by Jung as “the complex of representations which constitutes the centrum of my field of consciousness and appears to possess a very high degree of continuity and identity” [in Progoff 1973, 72]) as the visible tops of islands; and the personal unconscious (forgotten memories, repressed ideas, subliminal perceptions, etc.) as the wet and sandy shoreline that connects individual experience with the undifferentiated substratum of psychic experience, we can begin to get a sense of the complexity of his model. Jung perceived these various categories of consciousness as having permeable barriers, in that the material from the ocean of the unconscious continually laps at the shores of the ego, reshaping and

reforming its terrain. Conversely, aspects of personal consciousness are washed down into the undifferentiated depths of the psyche, presumably affecting the whole.

Jung claimed the “Self” as both an organizing center and the totality of the psyche, and distinguished the Self from the ego, which only constitutes a small part of the totality (1964, 162). He suggested that this Self (originating as “inborn possibility”) performs a regulating function between the unconscious and the ego that brings about the extension and the maturing of the personality. This notion of the Self is consistent with various mystical concepts from a variety of traditions: the Greek “Daimon,” the Egyptian “Ba-Soul,” or the Hindu “Atman” (1964, 162).

Jung came to understand this regulatory function of the Self on the basis of his study of over 80,000 dreams. The process of analysis developed within this theoretical framework concerned itself with the constant interplay between consciousness and the unconscious, “bringing order out of disorder, purpose out of aimlessness, and meaning out of senselessness” (Singer 1973, 12). Jung’s Self, then, is not an essentialized or idealized entity but an “organizing center” of consciousness capable of bringing fragments of experience into a developmentally coherent pattern. Macdonald (Macdonald 1995) thought that this idea of self-organization (the potential of the psyche to be self-regulating in the attainment of balance and wholeness) was the most useful of Jung’s formulations.

### **The Individuation Process**

...the human kingdom, beneath the floor of the comparatively neat little dwelling that we call our consciousness, goes down into unsuspected Aladdin caves. There dwell not only jewels but also dangerous Jinn abide: the

inconvenient or resisted psychological powers that we have not thought or dared to integrate into our lives... (Campbell 1949, 8)

I first came into contact with Jung's ideas as an undergraduate in the early 1970s when I studied the psychology of the unconscious. With a Jungian analyst as a mentor I carefully recorded and studied my own dreams, a process that I have continued to this time. I have approached Jung's work both academically and experientially. Over the years, I have come to understand individuation as a process of exploration in which unincorporated aspects of the psyche (Jung referred to these as the "shadow") are brought to light, making whole what was fragmented:

To be whole means to become reconciled with those sides of personality which have not been taken into account...no one who really seeks wholeness can develop his intellect at the price of repression of the unconscious, nor, on the other hand, can he live in a more or less unconscious state. (Fordham 1966, 77)

Individuation, according to feminist theologian Demaris Wehr "is the core process in analytical psychology. It is the goal of life and the way one truly becomes oneself...(it) is thus both process and goal" (1987, 49). The inner guiding factor of this process, the Self, according to Jung, was best apprehended through the investigation of one's dreams—spontaneous psychic products which establish themselves through images and symbols. In his extensive investigations into his patients' dreams, Jung noted invariant patterns of symbolic expression, leading him to formulate the idea of archetypes, "basic elemental tendencies of the human



personality which produce certain specific kinds of thinking patterns common to the entire human species” (Singer 1973, xxxii-xxxiii).

Anthony Stevens (1982) contends that Jung’s theory of archetypes, which “attributed the universal occurrence of homologous symbols and mythologems to the existence of universal structures within the human mind” (23) has recently acquired credence and relevance within the study of biobehaviorism. Ellen Dissanayake (1988), in her interdisciplinary study of human ethology, evolution, and art history, agrees, suggesting that archetypes are “inherent neuropsychic systems that guide patterns of behavior, which initiate, shape, and mediate the common behavioral characteristics and typical experiences of humankind” (31). Jung’s was not a narrow reductionist approach however. While he would likely agree with ethologists that human behavior is bounded to some degree by the genetic consequences of evolutionary adaptation, his was a psychology of meaning, depth, and incredibly variable expression. In Stevens’s words, “his whole manner of approach to these phenomena demonstrated how they may be studied in a way as not to destroy our awareness of the wonder and mystery of living” (38).

Jung found these collectively experienced patterns coincidental with certain well-defined themes and records of human mental activity known to us through the various mythic traditions. Joseph Campbell, the well known modern proponent of the mythic tradition understood this important connection between analytical psychology and the logic of myth: “Dream is the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream, both myth and dream are symbolic in the same general way of the dynamic of the psyche” (1973, 19). In myth, as we know, as well as in dream, the explorer encounters perils and obstacles as well as treasures. Sibylle Birkhauser-Oeri speaks to the challenges inherent

in the individuation process: “(it is) a psychological pattern of development that leads one into a confrontation with one’s shadow side and with evil, and also involves owning up to unrealized potential” (1988, 23). This encounter with the shadow—aspects of the personality that have been omitted or suppressed, and which need to be assimilated in order to effect the integration of the personality—is central to the individuation process.

The necessity of integrating the shadow can be understood in terms of basic psychological principles. The process of adapting to society requires some compromises between authentic “being” or natural desires, and social norms. This necessitates the construction of “personas,” the masks which signify the roles we play in society. The shadow becomes “that part of us which we will not allow ourselves to express” (Singer 1973, 215), “the one who wants to do all the things that we do not allow ourselves to do, who is everything we are not” (Fordham 1966, 49). While personas are to some degree necessary in our relationships with the world, there are obvious problems with over-identification with social roles. The danger of suppressing the shadow (Jung sometimes called it the “inferior” part of the personality) is that “when the unconscious counteraction is suppressed it loses its regulating impulse. It then begins to have an accelerating and intensifying effect on the conscious process” (Jung 1969, 79). The shadow, when denied, finds its own expression, generally in the activity of “projections”—“what we cannot admit in ourselves we often find in others” (Singer 1973, 215)—or in impulsive or inadvertent acts. Jung writes of the centrality of coming to terms with this aspect of the unconscious:

The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort.

To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspect of the personality as present and real. The act is the essential condition for self-knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance. Indeed, self-knowledge as a psychotherapeutic measure frequently requires much painstaking work extending over a long period. (Singer 1973, 215)

Jungian analysis thus involves a paradoxical double movement—the claiming of all of the aspects of the unconscious as oneself, while simultaneously gaining distance from, and control, over, compulsions.

### **Individuation as Spiritual Process**

Jung understood the ego-personality's coming-to-terms with its own background (the shadow) as essentially a spiritual act, corresponding with the "unio mentalis" or alchemical union of spirit and soul (Jung 1963, 497). Further, he suggested that religious doctrines have all sprung from such primary experience. Religious historians and theologians who prefer to believe in the revelatory origins of their particular creeds have challenged this point. Marie Louise von-Franz, however, cites a number of examples from various cultures in which rituals and religious customs have sprung directly from the dreams and visions of individuals. She demonstrates how these experiences evolve through time until the original unconscious material crystallizes into clearly defined and repeatable forms which can be shared with the cultural group and passed down from generation to generation (in Jung 1964). Increasingly, of course, participants in the rituals have no personal knowledge of the original experience and once meaningless rituals can become dry and lifeless forms.

This Jungian conceptualization of the origin of organized religious forms articulates an important difference between religion and spirituality, and highlights an inherent tension between them: While the spiritual process involves an idiosyncratic and unpredictable experience of archetypal energy, religion, more often than not, codifies and sanctions particular archetypes, especially those that serve social needs for order, continuity, and stability. Spirituality is a dynamic, exploratory process and religion is a structured form that emerges to contain, and to some extent, control the process.

The above distinction is not meant to privilege spiritual process and discredit religion. The practice and repetition of the original experience, according to Jung, need “not necessarily mean lifeless petrification” (1958, 9). On the contrary, rituals and religious customs may continue to provide a vital context for genuine spiritual experience for centuries. However, most religious traditions “resist further creative alterations by the unconscious” (Jung 1964, 253) and remain reproductions of one person’s individuation experience. I would suggest that it is this incapacity to sustain a dynamic link between their mythic/symbolic constructions and the personal psychological processes of their adherents that accounts, at least in part, for the diminishing relevance of formal religion in many people’s lives (Kesson 2001; 2002).

Despite his skepticism about formal religion, Jung had a lifelong interest in the religious impulse, with its infinite variety of forms, symbols, and motifs, and in the modern search for meaning that has accompanied the decline of formal religion. He preferred not to think of God as an entity, but concerned himself with “God-images” emanating from his patients’ psyches (a Christian theologian once called him a “religious naturalist” [Segaller & Berger 1990, 23]). We are reminded here of the primacy of the

human psyche in the pursuit of religious meaning: “Without a human psyche to receive divine inspirations and utter them in words or shape them in art, no religious symbol has ever come into the reality of our human life” (Jung 1964, 253). To Jung, the discovery of the unconscious, fully grasped, excludes the idea of a transcendent and knowable spiritual reality outside the mind of the human perceiver (1964) and suggests a Self that is less a transcendent entity than it is what Madeline Grumet calls an “I as a location of a stream of possibilities” (1988, 66) serving the function of intentionality. The “transcendent function” in Jung’s framework, does not signify the achievement of some otherworldly, disembodied condition, rather it involves “the transition from one psychic condition to another by means of the mutual confrontation of opposites” (Jung 1958, 489). It encompasses both process and method: “The production of unconscious compensations is a spontaneous process; the conscious realization is a method” (489). Indeed, it was Jung’s willingness to cope with all forms of psychological manifestation in human activity, as well as his disciplined inquiry and phenomenological methodology into the nature of “being,” that attracted Macdonald to his ideas.

Feminist scholars including Demaris Wehr (1987) and Charlene Spretnak (1982) have contested the essentialist underpinnings of Jung’s principles of the anima and the animus in an important effort to divest Jungian theory of its latent sexism. Others, including Naomi Goldenberg (1989) have challenged the transcendent, and therefore “anti-body” nature of the archetypes. This latter critique suggests that Jung held a dualistic worldview that saw body and spirit as separate realms of existence, but Jung himself challenges this interpretation in “The Spiritual Problems of Modern Man” (1964) when he talks about the spirit as the life of the body seen from within, and the body as the

outward manifestation of the spirit. Joseph Campbell, the mythologist, also understands archetypes as biologically grounded: “(T)he archetypes of the unconscious are manifestations of the organs of the body and their powers” (1973, 51).

The failure to distinguish between the archetypes themselves and archetypal images has led to some confusion surrounding this theory. Jung saw archetypes as formative elements in the collective unconscious that surfaced in certain universal patterns, and archetypal *images* as interactions between archetypes and culture. The Trickster, for example, is an archetypal figure that presents itself at many times and in many places (and in many dreams!) to challenge conventions and conventional wisdom, appearing in the animal forms of Coyote, Raven, Crow, or Hare in North and Central American indigenous cultures, as Edshu, a West African trickster god who loves to create uncertainty and chaos in humans, and as one of the aspects of the Lord Krishna, who loved to play jokes on mortals in the mythology of Hindu culture (Nisker 1990). The pattern is consistent, but the form varies.

This distinction does suggest some transcultural aspects of human experience that are intrinsic to embodiment. As in phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the “Flesh”—a schema that roots the body as a local “opening” and “clearing” in the multidimensional field of being (Levin 1985, 67)—the body, in this framework, might best be understood as the most dense expression of an increasingly subtle, seamless network of relations extending in principle to the entire universe. A pre-ontological attunement to “Being-as-a-whole” (the intent of many spiritual practices) woven into embodiment can facilitate the connection with primordial archetypal energies, which can then be employed in the work of psychological integration. This idea moves us beyond

metaphysical dualisms (body/spirit, physicalism/transcendentalism, materialism/idealism) to suggest a spiritual process that is at once immanent and transcendent and which is rooted in personal, embodied experience. Archetypal theory provides both the transpersonal and the cosmological dimensions necessary for a complete psychology of and for human “being.”

### **Individuation and the Development of Teachers**

In the pre-service as well as the continuing in-service education of teachers the emphasis is on gaining knowledge about the outer structures of the educational environment (social foundations of education, structures of the disciplines, effective schools, school law, etc.) as well as the relationship of the ego-personality to those structures (instructional methods, classroom management, etc.). From the perspective of Macdonald’s “dual dialectic” very little emphasis is placed upon the reflective transaction between the ego-personality and the inward depths of the Self. Important efforts have been made to incorporate personal narrative (Connelly & Clandinin 1988), autobiography (Pinar & Grumet 1976; Grumet 1980; Pinar 1994), and teacher lore (Schubert & Ayers 1999) into teacher education, and while many of these approaches emphasize story and invoke strong emotional content, they dance on the surface of spiritual awareness, without working specifically with archetypal processes.

Jung believed that the relationship between teacher and student was of primary importance to teaching and learning. Because of the subtle, but important effects of the unconscious mind of the teacher on the student, he felt that the teacher should be engaged in the process of self-discovery and healing: “No principles, however sound, no clever technique or mechanical aids can replace the influence of a well-developed personality”

(Fordham 1966, 112) and he suggested that it would be to the advantage of students if teachers were to learn more about their own inner lives. From Macdonald's transcendental developmental perspective, it is important for teachers to be "immersed in the process of centering... Thus the relationships between students and teachers are mutually responsive to the aim of centering" (Macdonald 1995, 94). Macdonald underscored the important difference between *knowing* a child's developmental status (based on the explicit kinds of knowledge gained in teacher education programs) and *understanding* the child (based on the tacit, intuitive knowledge that is gained through real inner work). Understanding, he said, is a much deeper concept, and is facilitated by the mutual engagement in the centering process.

These ideas suggest an approach to education that is interactive in the sense that *all* participants in the teaching and learning process are changed by the experience. It implies attention to, and appreciation for, emergent needs and shared interests. It suggests a movement away from the dominant technical concerns of planning, manipulating, calculating, and assessing toward the aesthetic, the intuitive, and the spontaneous. It requires a "fullness of presence," what Macdonald called "indwelling in the other, a touching of the sources of the other" and a willingness to "see one's self and the other in relation to the centers of being" (Macdonald 1995, 95). In accordance with this thinking, I have found that opportunities for renewal, rejuvenation, creative expression, and spiritual growth are at least as vital to the professional development of teachers as are new teaching methodologies or classroom management strategies.



### **Education as spiritual process**

This language of “being,” of connection, indwelling, and relationship draws us close to conceiving of the educative process as a spiritual activity. There is a qualitative difference, however, between a “spiritual” educational experience and a “religious” educational experience. Earlier I noted that spirituality is an experience-based psychological process while religion is a structured form that emerges to contain the process. Each embodies its own epistemological and methodological assumptions relative to the educational process.

In most traditional religions, especially dominant patriarchal forms, the primary epistemological frame is revealed truth. Knowledge is static and it exists prior to and outside of experience. The priests and preachers of the tradition serve as mediators of religious experience as they stand between God and the supplicant: “A priest is a functionary of a social sort. The society worships deities in a certain way, and the priest becomes ordained as a functionary to carry out that ritual” (Campbell 1973, 99-100). Obedience to the divine will of a Father-God is a central motif in contemporary religions and “fear, guilt, and alienation are some of the results” (Spretnak 1982, xvi). It is tempting to draw some parallels between this particular description of formal religion and our relatively universal approach to modern schooling. Despite some efforts to provide “experiences” for students to engage in, and occasional nods to the “affective” domain, education primarily concerns itself with bodies of knowledge that exist prior to and largely outside of student experience. Teachers, often as not, are expected to serve as functionaries, carrying out the rituals of an overly bureaucratized society: the memorization of facts, standardized tests of basic skills, and the socialization of students

to dominant norms and values. If students follow the prescribed behaviors and achieve externally set standards, they receive rewards (though these may seem as distant as Judgment Day!) and if they do not obey the strictures from “on high” they do indeed sometimes suffer from fear, guilt, and alienation.

In contrast to this religious analogue, an experiential approach to spirituality loosely termed *integrative* or *holistic* corresponds more readily with the Jungian quest for psychological wholeness. Charlene Spretnak (1982) includes women’s spirituality, goddess spirituality, Wicca, indigenous spirituality, Taoism and certain forms of Buddhism, Sufism and Yoga in this cluster. Within these traditions, experience is “the stuff of wisdom and growth *as an ongoing process*” (xvi). Authority in most of these traditions is diffused, and spiritual energy is considered immanent as well as transcendent. Shamanic practices fall within the purview of these practices and it is revealing to contrast the qualitatively different role of a shaman to that of a priest. Campbell notes that unlike the priest, who serves a deity who was there before he came along, “the shaman’s powers are symbolized in his own familiars, deities of his own personal experience. His authority comes out of a psychological experience, not a social ordination” (1973, 100). Like the Jungian analyst who has accomplished extensive work on herself, the shaman has traversed the terrain of her unconscious and can therefore serve as guide to the uninitiated. However, every journey into the unknown, even for an experienced traveler, is a step into *mystery*. I want to suggest that it is this very uncertainty, this risk, this commitment to an unpredictable and unfolding process that characterizes a spiritual approach to education. Jung describes the attitude of the ancient

alchemist, and it (somewhat modified) seems pertinent to our discussion of teaching and learning within the transcendental developmental paradigm:

Here is a (student) before me whose nature is unknown to me. The nature of the contract to which we will commit ourselves is also unknown to me. And the goal, the end of the process, is equally unknown. (1968, 393)

Whichever of these two paradigms, the religious or the spiritual, that you identify with, what is most important to understand is that even secular educational theories and practices are grounded in (often unconscious) ontological and epistemological assumptions that need to be made explicit.

For those readers who agree that it is worth the risk to incorporate the individuation process into their teaching, three points are worth noting: 1) We are working in educational, not therapeutic settings 2) Our goals must be primarily academic and 3) We need to be sensitive to boundaries set by our students. Given the challenges of working in this way, I want to conclude with an appeal to incorporate the arts into our work with teachers and students. I have found that carefully designed aesthetic experiences can be meaningful pedagogical bridges that connect inner psychological dynamics with ego-level cognitive processes and that they offer a range of possibilities for inter- and intrapersonal growth.

### **Art, Archetypes, and the Creative Process**

Macdonald, visionary and futurist, prophesied that “the human race is beginning to take another major step into the unknown source of its imagination” and “that we may be rapidly approaching a new level of psychological and cultural growth from which dramatically new understandings of human potential will emerge” (Macdonald 1995, 76).

This potential would emerge, he thought, through perception and imagery encountered on the inward journey. Perhaps anticipating the self-centeredness and narcissism that could emerge from a lopsided emphasis on personal subjectivity, he called for a balanced approach to spiritual development with his idea of the “radical centering” of the person in the world. Critical thinking and reasoning about social structures remain an important aspect of the dual dialectic. Echoing Jung, however, he also believed that the centering process, which both of them saw as a psycho-social process, could only occur if the doorway to the unconscious mind is “unlocked and left ajar...the process draws its power and energy from sources that are not entirely explicable” (Macdonald 1995, 87). Estés also alludes to the mystery and ineffable nature of this source and suggests some fruitful ways of tapping into it:

(T)his land between the worlds is that inexplicable place we all recognize once we experience it, but its nuances slip away and shape change if one tries to pin them down, except when we use poetry, music, dance, or story. (1992, 30)

As a culture, we have come to view the arts as mere decoration or entertainment, or perhaps as vehicles for experimentation or creative expression. Art has, as Dewey (1934) suggested, become separated from the main currents of lived experience. In evolutionary terms, however, this is a relatively recent development. For much of human history, people valued the arts as “powerful vehicles of personal and collective transformation” (London 1989, 8). Tibetan harmonic singing and Navajo ritual sand painting come to mind as models of the creative use of sound, form, and color to effect individual and communal healing. Heide Götter-Abendroth (1982), in her thesis on postmodern matriarchal aesthetics, presents a vision of art as an

inseparable part of daily life and vital to the spiritual life of the community. How might we bring this integrative sensibility back into our lives?

In my courses on arts in the curriculum, I provide opportunities for teachers to engage with a variety of different aesthetic forms, to keep journals of their experiences, and to design curriculum that integrates the arts in a meaningful way. My rationale for focusing on the arts as an integrating factor derives from a number of commitments: First, it is to honor Gardner's (1993, 1983) findings that the arts embody specific and interacting intelligences, all of which are important to the holistic development of our students. Second, it is to facilitate the understanding, through direct experience, of how the various artistic processes can activate the connection with archetypal energies, and of how these archetypes can be used in the development and integration of the personality. Third, it is in hopes that as teachers come to appreciate the self-organizing principle in their own learning, they will come to value it in their students, engendering more authentic teaching and learning experiences. And finally, it is for the capacity of the arts to foster significant communal experiences.

Contemporary Jungian therapies utilize a variety of artistic and imaginative processes to bring the contents of the unconscious into explicit form: painting, sculpture, sand play, story, active imagination, and movement. The art therapy world owes a great deal to Jung's influence. Hans Prinzhorn, in his (1972) study of the artwork of mental patients suggested that "creative expression is a spontaneous and unconscious effort of the soul to treat itself in keeping with a 'uniform metaphysical instinct'" (McNiff 1992, 17). Jung himself, in his initial investigations into his own psychic processes, struggled to express his overpowering dreams and visions through painting, sculpture, and words:

To the extent that I managed to translate the emotions into images—that is to say, to find the images that were concealed in the emotions—I was inwardly calm and reassured. Had I left those images hidden in the emotions, I might have been torn to pieces by them...as a result of my experiment I learned how helpful it can be, from the therapeutic point of view, to find the particular image which lie behind the emotions. (1963, 177)

In a curriculum reconceptualized around the transcendental developmental paradigm, the expressive arts should be considered educational “basics.” The arts can open the doorways of perception, connect us with archetypal energies, provide shared frameworks for the enactment of archetypal motifs, and communicate inner experience through shared cultural symbols. In my work with teachers, I have drawn upon this fourfold process—perception, connection, enactment, and symbolization—as a vehicle for personal and social transformation. In so doing, I hope to engage students in the dual dialectic, exploring their subjectivity, integrating their discoveries into their personality, and participating in shared social processes.

In one activity (for more details on this activity, see London 1989), I introduce the concept of the persona and the shadow, and talk about how unmasking rigidly defended parts of ourselves can release a great deal of creative energy. I always remind students to set their own comfort zones and boundaries, and that this not therapy, but an exercise in awareness of how the expressive arts process works. Participants then create two masks—one of their “public” aspect and one of the “other” dimension of themselves. They hold conversations, in pairs, with their own shadow and their own persona, while their partner wears the appropriate mask and

silently listens. This is inevitably a powerful and moving experience which invites the possibility of significant growth in personal awareness. I have found that these kinds of arts-based encounters, with an emphasis on inter and intrapersonal communication, tend to establish trust and bond learners more effectively than dialogue alone. One graduate student who works with learning disabled students and their families writes about this mask-making activity in her journal:

One of the issues my students struggle with is “owning” the label of A.D.D. It is important that they begin to do this for self-acceptance —embracing the wholeness of themselves—even with this label. It opens the door to understanding themselves as learners, how the A.D.D. affects their learning in the classroom situation. From the standpoint of understanding and acceptance we can begin to work on how to build their strengths and accommodate their weaknesses. They can ask for what they need from their teachers and actively participate in designing strategies for successful learning.

I introduced the mask making to the kids as a way of acknowledging this aspect of themselves. They constructed the “happy” or positive side, when they felt good about themselves, and their other side, where they’ve put their A.D.D. and what feelings are attached to that side of themselves. By sharing their masks and having time to reflect upon their feelings, we shared their common fears and feelings, and they discovered they were not alone in suffering and suppressing this aspect of themselves. We could then move on to understanding how their brains process information, and to focus on their gifts and strengths.

In another graduate seminar, we focused on the creation of personal stories and myths, uncovering the common archetypal images that emerged from the group. One student, a secondary English teacher, writes eloquently in his journal about the relationship between his own spiritual process and his changing ideas about teaching:

In my own art process, I often find myself transported back to my years growing up in the Midwest; there lies the impressions of a world bound up by much forbidden communication, of truths neglected, conflicts unresolved, growth deferred...I find myself needing to invest in creative ways to revisit the scenes of my boyhood and try to open up a dialogue with the forces that stifled me—home, school, church. And so, for example, with the piece entitled “Holy Water,” I felt very much back in the rural church I grew up in, trying to address the stagnation of the ritual and of people handing over their faith to a lord and in so doing divesting their own responsibility to the depths of spiritual growth.

In the classroom, I’m becoming more and more aware of the lines or thresholds or limitations that can become imposed on the group by its fears, insecurities, cautiousness, or simply entropy. In this case, forbidden communication is the unwillingness to take the risk of exposing one’s own experience, of coming out of a cynical, detached position, of experimenting with one’s own sense of vulnerability—of telling one’s own story. It is, I believe, in pushing out these lines a little further that consciousness is expanded, that the group dynamic feels the strength and vitality of someone venturing out of their walls— and learning becomes a personal and a communal experience.



These are just two examples of what teacher education students have to say about their involvement in the creative process. Repeatedly I have observed this process open up new psychological horizons and effect shifts in thinking about teaching and learning. Words that consistently show up in their journals to describe their experiences include *journey, discovery, affirmation, transformation, opening, and community*. Many elements of the classic mythic quest are apparent: Students talk about venturing forth into uncharted territory, overcoming obstacles and perils, battling the shadow (often composed of self-doubt, inadequacies, fear of failure), discovering a great treasure, and bringing it back to the community (often, the students they teach).

To understand the expressive arts as “the chance to encounter dimensions of our inner being and to discover deep, rewarding patterns of meaning” (London 1989, 7) raises important questions about the boundaries between education and therapy. I wish I had an easy answer to these questions. As I work in holistic ways with teachers, utilizing the expressive arts to make contact with deeper layers of personal meaning, I am at once convinced of the educational necessity of doing so, and humbled by the responsibility. When we deal with archetypes, we “conjure the gods,” and the process must be approached with respect and reverence. My commitment to this, despite the risks, stems from my conviction that good teaching is proportional to the psychic health and wholeness of the teacher, that such movement toward wholeness is effected by the integration of unassimilated material from the unconscious into consciousness, and that the connection with archetypal energies can facilitate this process. In spite of the difficulties and challenges of working in holistic ways, we must recognize that we live in a broken world, one desperately in need of healing, one that has lost touch with the very

roots of its being—and respond in ways which are commensurate with the depth of the crisis. Jung made us aware that it is usually a precipitous personal crisis that propels the person into the quest for wholeness. Perhaps we have reached such a cultural crisis, one that demands a “collective individuation” process of us.

### **Conclusion**

Let me end with a personal story. At the beginning of a semester, some time ago, I had a powerful dream that seemed to relate to my frenetic pace of activity and generally overwhelmed state of mind. In my dream, I was in the shower when suddenly the pipes burst and water sprayed everywhere, uncontrollably. I was distraught, unable to figure out how to mend the fixtures and keep from becoming submerged. Just as I had about reached my wit’s end, I saw myself as a mermaid, lying in a calm pool, totally at peace. When I awoke, I had a strong feeling that the dream was a message from my unconscious about the importance of staying attuned to my deeper self, symbolized by the archetypal oceanic figure of the mermaid, to maintain psychological balance. Throughout that semester, I became fascinated with the image I had encountered in my dream, and did a number of mandala drawings, sculpted a clay figure, and wrote poetry with the mermaid as a central motif. The work I did was personal, and I only shared it with a friend in a distant city.

I happened to be teaching an undergraduate class in language and literacy at the time, and my students decided they wanted to write their own fairy tales. To my surprise, two of the students wrote fairy tales specifically about mermaids going back to the sea, and two others wrote stories with closely related themes. Then, at the end of this busy semester, one of my graduate students invited me on a canoeing trip—he perceived

(rightly) that I was overworked and in need of a change of pace. Floating on a Vermont lake brought me a wonderful sense of calm and relaxation. The name of his boat? *The Call of the Voice of the Mermaid!*

Synchronicity? Jung's depth psychology invites us to shift our worldview so as to incorporate such "meaningful coincidences." Rather than a materialist universe, which attributes such events to pure chance, or an idealist universe, which attributes such events to divine intervention, Jung asks us to consider the possibilities of a holistic universe, in which all the spheres of experience are interconnected and interpenetrating, and in which meaningful coincidences are inherent in the model. It's an intriguing possibility.

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