Timothy Leonard
Peter Willis
Editors

Pedagogies of the Imagination

Mythopoetic Curriculum in Educational Practice

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Foreword

I have long admired the mythopoetic tradition in curriculum studies. That admiration followed from my experience as a high-school teacher of English in a wealthy suburb of New York City at the end of the 1960s. A "dream" job—I taught four classes of 15–20 students during a nine-period day—in a "dream" suburb (where I could afford to reside only by taking a room in a retired teacher's house), many of these often Ivy-League-bound students had everything but meaningful lives. This middle-class, Midwestern young teacher was flabbergasted. In one sense, my academic life has been devoted to understanding that searing experience.

Matters of meaning seemed paramount in the curriculum field to which Paul Klohr introduced me at Ohio State. Klohr assigned me the work of curriculum theorists such as James B. Macdonald. Like Timothy Leonard (who also studied with Klohr at Ohio State) and Peter Willis, Macdonald (1995) understood that school reform was part of a broader cultural and political crisis in which meaning is but one casualty. In the mythopoetic tradition in curriculum studies, scholars labor to understand this crisis and the conditions for the reconstruction of meaning in our time, in our schools.

In the United States at least, the most known recent reference to the mythopoetic was not educational but gendered, associated with the controversial men's movement of the 1990s (see Savran 1998, p. 169). Robert Bly's *Iron John* (1990) stayed on the hardback bestseller list for more than a year; Bill Moyers' PBS profile of Bly ("A Gathering of Men") sold 27,000 videocassette copies and 10,000 transcripts. No one-man phenomenon, by the mid-nineties, Peter Filene (1998, p. 241) reports, men could read 24 different "mythopoetic journals" and walk into more than 40 men's centers. In the classified ads of *Wingspan: Journal of the Male Spirit* (circulation 120,000), men were invited to attend various kinds of men's events (Filene 1998).

Bly's figure of the archaic "wild man" represented an essence of atavistic masculinity which presumably all men could reclaim. The "men's movement" was a response to the recurring crisis of masculinity (see Pinar 2001, pp. 321–416, 855–860, 1139–1152), engendered this time by the post-Fordist family structure with its two working parents, by the stress and alienation of contemporary corporate life, and by the feminist movement. Bly asserted men must get back in touch with their male psyche and "the nourishing dark[ness]" (1990, p. 6) within. During the

first decades of the twentieth century, Pamela Caughie (1999) points out, D. H. Lawrence had expressed ambivalence toward the healing processes Bly endorsed—those conducted through rural retreats and so-called "native" rituals, such as drumming and dancing—but "he [Lawrence] too associated a primal maleness with a nourishing darkness, figured as paternal, and attributed the crisis of masculinity in his day in part to women's self-assertion" (1999, p. 155). Indeed, David Savran asserts that "Bly's 'mythopoetics' remains a 'white mythology,' firmly rooted in imperialistic fantasies," themselves gendered (1998, p. 196; also see Stoler 1995). Like the "mythopoetic men's movement," Caughie argues, Lawrence's cosmography imagined new gender relations in terms of "spiritual renewal, not social and material change" (Caughie 1999, p. 155).

Not so this collection. Timothy Leonard and Peter Willis introduce the collection by acknowledging the urgency of such change. Through the processes of mythopoesis, they suggest, such change may be stimulated. The choice is not, then, spiritual renewal *or* social-material transformation: the argument here is that the former can occur *through* the latter. It is only a spiritually impoverished people who could mistake standardized examinations as measures of educational progress. It is a people bereft of meaning who could cast about for external representations of it. This analysis is reminiscent of those subjective senses of colonialism and of post-colonial reparation legendary activist Frantz Fanon theorized (see Oliver 2004, p. 15; Sekyi-Otu 1996, p. 238).

That the human mind is a function of imagination is, Leonard and Willis tell us, the unifying thread of the mythopoetic project. Threatened by certain forms of hyper-rationality and intensified by placelessness (see Bowers 2000, p. 65), simply releasing the imagination is no solution, as the history of the racist imagination (see Pinar 2001, p. 1129ff.), for example, reminds us. Perhaps that is why Patricia Holland and Noreen Garman (this volume) emphasize the moral in the mythopoetic, why Leonard and Willis underscore its political and progressive character, and why, in another volume, Mary Aswell Doll (see 2000, p. xiv) associates the mythopoetic with women visionaries. The curricular forms such a moral mythopoetics can take are outlined in several of the essays in this volume.

In their conclusion to the collection, Timothy Leonard and Peter Willis summarize these forms. I supplement these with one outlined by Mary Aswell Doll in her remarkable study of Samuel Beckett. "Beckett's work," Doll (1988, p. 5) suggests, "lends itself wonderfully to a mythopoetic method precisely because it breaks form." It rejects the "gridlike certainty" (1988, p. 5) that Leonard and Willis associate with the current cult of abstraction and hyper-rationality, materialized in standardized examinations. In this rejection, Doll tells us, Beckett's mythopoetics neither denies the past nor clings to it, allowing us to "read patterns afresh" (1998, p. 5). Through the study of this text, we can read patterns afresh and in so doing reconstruct the meaning of curriculum. As Timothy Leonard and Peter Willis remind us, that project is urgent.

William F. Pinar

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In the course of this study, we have met and been inspired by writers and thinkers whose wisdom and grace helped us find a way through impasses of educational theory, research method, presentation, writing style, and the like. Many of them have of course provided chapters in this text while others have provided inspiration in other forms. We would like to thank and pay tribute especially to Maxine Greene, Professor Emeritus at Columbia Teachers College, New York for ongoing inspiration and challenge to action and aesthetic education. In many ways ideas and reflections in the chapters of this collection are a continuation of conversations with her and her writings over many years.

In the USA, we would also like to thank Bill Pinar and the JCT colleagues for support and challenge together with Noreen Garman from Pittsburgh, Paul Klohr in Columbus, Bill Doll at Louisiana State University, and Domenica Devine at Georgia Southern University. In Australia, we would like to thank Jamie Bradbeer for his constant encouragement and support and colleagues from the University of South Australia at the Centre for Research in Education, Equity and Work (CREEW) in the Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies (HRISS): Alan Mayne, Alan Reid, Roger Harris, Michele Simons, Tom Stehlik, and Miriam McLean.

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We would like to thank finally and especially our partners who have shared our work: Mary with Tim and Eileen with Peter.

Timothy Leonard and Peter Willis

Contents

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James Bradbeer is a teacher at the Melbourne campus of the Australian International Academy. He teaches senior English. His doctoral study examined the agency of teacher imagination in curriculum. It was published by Teachers College Press (Columbia University, NY) under the title *Imagining curriculum*.

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Patricia Cranton received her Ph.D. degree (1976) from the University of Toronto. Patricia's primary research interests have been in the areas of teaching and learning in higher education, transformative and self-directed learning, and most recently authenticity and individuation. Among others, Patricia Cranton's books include *Becoming an authentic teacher* (2001) and the second edition of *Understanding and promoting transformative learning* (2006).

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Dr. Rod Fawns is Head of Science Education and Coordinator of the Dip. Ed. in the Education Faculty, University of Melbourne. He has been teaching science methods, and generally preparing teachers, for over 30 years and also quite frequently getting back to schools to work with teachers. He also teaches curriculum theory and practice at postgraduate levels and he has supervised over 100 research theses at masters and doctoral level. He has consulted and advised Australian State and Commonwealth committees in various capacities. He is an honorary life member of the Science Teachers Association of Victoria. His Ph.D. was a social history of the science curriculum in Australia.

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Noreen Garman is Professor of Education in the Administrative and Policy Studies Department at the University of Pittsburgh where she is the former coordinator of the program in Social and Comparative Analysis in Education. Her specializations include curriculum studies, instructional supervision, and qualitative/interpretive research. She is a Fulbright Scholar who has published numerous articles in professional journals and situates her research mode in interpretive forms of inquiry. With Maria Piantanida, she is the co-author of *The qualitative dissertation: a guide for students and faculty* (Corwin Press, 1999) and *The authority to imagine: the struggle toward representation in dissertation writing* (Peter Lang 2006). Her current research agenda includes work with teaching fellows to carry out and study a justice-oriented curriculum within a dialogic classroom pedagogy and also the publication of a series of policy studies concerned with educators as public intellectuals in the era of test-based reform.

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Peter Hilton received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago (2005) in curriculum and instruction under the guidance of William H. Schubert. He has a MAT from National-Louis University (1986) with a focus on reading, an MA in Individualized Studies: American Studies from the University of Oregon (1977), and a BA from San Jose State University's New College (1970). He served in a Chicago settlement house as a youth program director for eight years, taught middle school reading in the Illinois public schools for ten years, and has been at Saint Xavier University, Chicago since 1992. His primary role is research instructor for the Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership Program (MATL) where the culminating experience is an action research project, usually done collaboratively and under the supervision of the research instructor. His research interests include teacher research, arts-based inquiry, autobiographical inquiry, and the out-of-school curricula that inform teacher education.

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Timothy Leonard
Timothy Leonard, Professor Emeritus at Saint Xavier University in Chicago, was a high school teacher and a journalist in Cincinnati, Ohio and also a juvenile parole officer in northern Kentucky before obtaining his doctorate degree in curriculum and foundations in the College of Education at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. Having majored in philosophy as an undergraduate, he taught history and philosophy of education and curriculum theory courses at Saint Xavier University in Chicago, Illinois for 31 years. He currently resides in Cincinnati, Ohio where he teaches educational research to graduate students in the School of Education at Xavier University.

His scholarly work has ranged from studies on the integration of the arts and sciences in curriculum, to the problem of white supremacy in American schools, to educational biography, and spiritual and religious education. He has written a brief biography of the radical Italian educator Lorenzo Milani, a full-length biography of Eugene Walsh, a professor of philosophy of education and well-known Roman Catholic liturgist in the United States, and a text for undergraduate students in philosophy of education.

Dr. Leonard has had a lifelong interest in the role of myth in human experience and knowledge. The works of Mircea Eliade, Joseph Campbell, and Dominic Crossan have supported his theory, published in 1983, that the disciplines of knowledge can be understood as the life stories of their practitioners, and that the curriculum is an emergent of the life stories of teachers and their conversations and work with each other.

Frances MacKay

Dr. Frances MacKay is a lecturer in counseling within the School of Health at the University of New England, New South Wales. She confesses to a longstanding interest in mythopoesis, although she would not always have known to name it that. Following postgraduate studies in counseling and English literature, her Ph.D. research, *Sacred stories: counsellor narratives of personal and professional development*, enabled her to bring together interests in psychology, philosophy, literature, and the psychospiritual journey. These interests also inform her approach to counselor education.

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William F. Pinar teaches curriculum theory at the University of British Columbia, where he holds a Canada Research Chair and directs the Center for the Study of the Internationalization of Curriculum Studies. In 2000 Pinar received an American Educational Research Association Lifetime Achievement Award; in 2004 he received an AERA Outstanding Book Award for *What is curriculum theory*? (Lawrence Erlbaum) Two books appeared in 2006: *The new synoptic text and other essays: curriculum development after the reconceptualization* (Peter Lang) and *Race, religion and a curriculum of reparation* (Palgrave Macmillan).

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In recognition of his work with youth, and particularly youth with ADHD, Brenton won a Young Australian of the Year Award for Community Service in 1998.

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His main research areas concern transformative, "second chance," and "resistant" learning among adults, the power of the imagination in learning, and relationships between religion, spirituality, and civil society.

Recent edited publications, both published by Post Pressed, Queensland, Australia are: *Towards re-enchantment: education, imagination and the getting of wisdom* (with Heywood, McCann, and Neville) and *Wisdom, spirituality and the aesthetic* (with Leonard, Hodge, and Morrison).

David Wright
David Wright is Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Western Sydney. His major areas of research are creativity and learning. He has a background in and an ongoing enthusiasm for writing as a process of understanding. He is interested in the body as a learning system and his research has often used images and understandings drawn from cognitive biology and conceptual theories of language development. He is interested in the growing field of arts practice research and has long valued opportunities to work collaboratively with other creative people to construct learning communities that reinforce and support individual learning.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Timothy Leonard and Peter Willis

"Just the facts, ma'am." The words of Sergeant Joe Friday on the old television series *Dragnet* are perhaps the most famous, if inaccurate, in the history of television. As simplistic and inane as these words are, they dominate educational policy and practice in the English-speaking world. Nothing is wrong with getting the facts, of course, but the problem is that all facts are mediated by history, memory, imagination, and cultural construction. We never know "just the facts," for they are mediated by myriad versions and visions. An educational system that does not deal seriously with these versions and visions is destined for extinction.

The project of this book is urgent. Resistance to the domination of education by belief in the facts revealed solely by mandated standards and standardized testing must be practiced on many fronts, none of which is more fundamental than the imagination, which is the source of all versions and visions of the natural and cultural world.

Such resistance is not new. In the late 1960s and early 1970s several scholars in the field of curriculum and instruction were trying to account for the wide range of approaches to the field. In their view, one could not discount the ideas and practices of curriculum scholars and practitioners merely because they were not swimming in the mainstream. The mainstream paradigm for curriculum studies at that time had been established by the work of Ralph Tyler. Tyler had published the syllabus for his course at the University of Chicago "Basic principles of curriculum and instruction" in 1948. According to Tyler, a curriculum emerged from a school district's response to four questions: What are the objectives the curriculum sets out to achieve? What are the learning experiences that are best suited to achieve those objectives? How are those learning experiences best organized in the light of the objectives? And how do curriculum workers evaluate the extent to which the objectives have been met?

The model was elegant in its simplicity and its common sense practicality, for all curriculum workers and teachers act purposefully, attend to the details of student responses to learning materials and instructional practices, and evaluate the results. One could both analyze existing curricula and develop new ones based on these principles. However, the Tyler model left so much up to the educational philosophy and learning theory of the individual school or district that it could not account for the range of approaches to curriculum building and interpretation that were being

T. Leonard, P. Willis (eds.), *Pedagogies of the Imagination,*

advocated and practised in the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, by confining the evaluation of curriculum to the assessment of its original objectives, the model diminished the role of personal interaction, imagination, emotion, and serendipity in the lived experience of teachers and students in actual classrooms.

One of several attempts to develop a model that would account for the wide range of philosophical approaches to curriculum was made by James Macdonald in his 1981 essay "Theory, practice and the hermeneutic circle" (Macdonald 1981). Macdonald noted that the field was constituted by three kinds of theorists and practitioners:

1. Those who were mostly concerned with the control of student learning and behavior (sometimes referred to as control theorists)
2. Those who applied a class, racial, and gender analysis to "control" theories such as Tyler's, and understood curriculum as a resistance to the hegemony of unfettered capitalism, racism, and patriarchy (sometimes called critical theorists)
3. Those who rejected the way the Tyler model is used to reduce, if not eliminate, the role of imagination and compassion in student learning (sometimes called reconceptualists, interpretivist, humanistic, or holistic theorists)

Macdonald called the curriculum work of the humanistic and holistic educators "mythopoesis." This book is a collection of essays by writers who think it essential to re-engage curriculum thought with Macdonald's insights, particularly in the current era of state-mandated accountability run amok, in which not a single state or nation publishes a standard that says, "Teachers and students shall be able to critically examine these standards and to imagine standards that differ from the ones contained in this document."

The chapters of this book move beyond this tripartite conception of curriculum work through a focused analysis of the term "mythopoesis" and the role of imagination in educational practice. Mythopoesis is derived from the Greek word meaning myth making. While some people might think that it is demeaning to call teachers and curriculum workers myth makers, the authors of this volume consider such a denomination unavoidably true, worthy, and useful. Teachers and curriculum workers are, indeed, myth makers. The term "myth" in this text does not mean untruths. On the contrary, it means the stories we tell that give meaning to existence. We live in the stories that make up our lives. Within and around these stories are many other stories. Some of the stories give us a place to stand in the world, and constitute the narratives we are accustomed to call the disciplines of knowledge, including science and mathematics. Others help us to reason about the world. Others ignite our imaginations to imagine the world and the others who inhabit it: to imagine other persons and other cultures. Some stories provide outlets for humor, humility, humanity; they fill our lives with self-effacement, elation, and good old laughter. Still other stories challenge us to speak and live compassionately, seeking a world that thrives on truth and practices justice. Though the authors of these chapters differ on how mythopoesis functions in the curriculum, they each offer generative or practical versions or visions of a curriculum that takes mythopoesis seriously, as a direction educators must take.

The link between imagination and mythopoesis as understood here was provided by James Hillman (1981) in his conception of "imaginal knowing." Imaginal knowing is not fantasy, but is linked to the way humans imagine the real world. Imaginal knowing moves the heart, holds the imagination, finds the fit between self-stories, public myths, and the content of cultural knowledge. It is deeply personal, yet open to the universe. The curriculum, as conceptualized here, is the medium through which imaginal knowing is evoked in both teachers and students. As Thompson put it: "The capacity to think in images and then transform them into other dimensions of reference is vital to art, poetry, and science" (1987, p. 8).

Karen Armstrong in a recent review (2005) spoke of two elements in human thought, one stressing the rational and the real, the other the imaginal and the significant. As she writes:

> In the pre-modern world, particularly for the Greeks, it was generally understood that there were two largely complementary ways of pursuing thought in order to come to truth. These were called *mythos* and *logos*. *Logos* (reason; science) was exact, practical and essential to human life. It was validated by its so-called testable correspondence to external reality. Myth expressed the more mysterious aspects of human experience and corresponded to the human desire to make sense of a world in which humans are often out of control. (Armstrong 2005, p. 43)

Some of the authors of this collection hold this distinction to be very useful in discerning the place of mythopoesis in the curriculum. Others hold the distinction as useful only as an analytical tool, but consider *mythos* and *logos* to be indistinguishable in the experience of teaching and learning.

In Chapter 2, Patricia Holland and Noreen Garman set the notion of mythopoesis in curriculum in the context of its historical origins in the work of Macdonald. They question Macdonald's claim that critical theorists make their arguments on the same ground of linear rationality adopted by control theorists, and they argue that mythopoesis in fact underlies the break critical theorists made with control theorists. They argue that mythopoetic methodology moves in two directions simultaneously. The first of these directions they call "demystifying," a process of reducing illusion. The second they call "demythologizing," a process of restoring meaning. Thus, by joining what they call the critical and interpretive approaches to curriculum within the frame of the mythopoetic, Holland and Garman set the tone of this book, which is that the mythopoetic frame in curriculum work moves educators to "imagine the real" (Lynch 1967).

In 1967 ninety per cent of Australian voters approved a referendum granting citizenship to Indigenous Australians, and granting power to the government to pass laws regarding Indigenous peoples. This event was the formal beginning of what Australians call reconciliation. Until that time the Australian government had never made any agreements about, or treaties with, Aboriginal peoples. In the forty years since the referendum, some, but insufficient, progress has been made in these matters. When Australians speak of reconciliation they are referring to the movement to honor the culture of Indigenous Australians while providing support for granting them equal status with all Australians. An integral part of this movement is the education of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Peter Bishop addresses

this reconciliation movement in Chapter 3, advocating a mythopoetic pedagogy that takes into account the need to imagine all the contradictions of Australian history while also imagining the possibilities of genuine reconciliation among all the people of Australia. Bishop draws upon a wide range of sources: philosophers, novelists, poets, and psychologists from Third World countries as well as from Australia, Europe, and North America. Through his intense analysis of reconciliation pedagogy in Australia, he asserts a powerful hope that imaginal dialogue among conflicting cultures in any nation may become a source for what might be called in other contexts peace learning and "peace education." While skeptical about such mythopoetic dialogue entering the monkish culture of the universities, he sees it as a crucial marginal source for highly imaginative and beneficial change in society.

Aidan Davison, in the lyrical Chapter 4, is not skeptical of mythopoesis' potential to enter the curriculum. Much like Bradbeer (1998), he envisions that mythopoetic practice will enable teachers to be aware that they are indeed bearers of myth. What he means by this is that current mainstream positivistic curriculum practice honours reliability, consistency, and measurable indicators, more than the basic messiness of human experience; but when teachers step from behind that mask of order and certainty, they enable students to recognize both the vastness of human ignorance, and the need to engage with teachers and each other in imaginative and shared inquiry.

To help teachers develop the kind of awareness that Davison requires, John Dirkx uses his experience as an adult and teacher educator to explore the uses of imaginative and mythopoetic pedagogy in the education of professional educators. In Chapter 5, Dirkx explores the complexities of the self–other relationship when people come together to provide a service or effect change. These self–other relationships, he says, are imaginatively constructed and emotionally charged in particular ways that may challenge the integrity of the very work that has brought these people together. Given this reality, Dirkx explores the process of self-formation in professional education. For Dirkx, the process of self-formation moves professional education students to enter into relationships with their own students and their peers in a way that is both centered and empathetic.

In Chapter 6 Timothy Leonard studies the case of mythopoetic pedagogy in the science and mathematics curriculum. There is an assumption in this chapter that the teacher self-formation developed by Davison and Dirkx can be effective, for science and mathematics are considered as a shared search for beauty. Leonard claims that, when science is conceptualized as a search for beauty that is shared by teachers and students, imprecise and sometimes erroneous statements need to be accepted as part of the process of learning. Following the thought of Charles Sanders Peirce, he claims that science moves in a communal process from what he calls the fantastic imagination to the realistic imagination, from common-sense language to precise language and mathematical formulation. As the community of inquirers moves towards beauty it is enveloped in myth, in stories that give the search meaning. The key to this chapter is the notion of high drama—beautiful drama—at all levels of scientific conversation from beginners to experts, from imprecise yet accessible words, to sophisticated and precise visual representation.

To help readers get a picture of the kind of work Dirkx refers to when he speaks of educating educational professionals, David Wright in Chapter 7 describes research he has conducted with a group of beginning and pre-service teachers in a series of workshops focused on the creative process. The starting point of these workshops was theater and improvisation. Wright makes a distinction between mythopoesis, which he considers a social construct, and autopoesis, which he considers a personal construct. Through autopoesis actors and improvisers look at themselves participating in mythopoesis. This requires both action and reflection, and through the testimony of participants Wright describes improvising, acting, reflecting, and communicating as essential elements of mythopoetic pedagogy. These elements synthesize the body, the imagination, and the mind in public discourse that moves participants to a usable future, not just a remembered past. Wright concludes that, by using the body and the voice in unaccustomed, challenging, and public ways, participants reveal to themselves and each other the potential of learning as a body—mind—communal experience.

One of the perennial predicaments of educators is the relationship between the individual and the community. Neo-Rousseauian educators of the 1960s and 1970s, such as John Holt (1995), struggled mightily against predominant social-efficiency educators, yet the general public tended to think of their work as too extreme in its fostering of the individual child and tended to disregard what they were saying. Renewed attention to the work of John Dewey and the work of contemporary prophetic pragmatists such as Cornel West may be viewed as a welcome attempt to synthesize the person and the common good in education. The authors in this collection, with their emphasis on imagination and narrative, are all reaching for such a synthesis, yet from slightly different perspectives. We think that psychoanalytic and depth psychology have revealed crucial information about the individual person that Dewey and the pragmatists were either unaware of, or overlooked. This is why the work of Freud and Jung, Corbin and Hillman are so important to us. Wright's work in Chapter 7 exemplifies this attempt at such a synthesis. Yet the pull of introspection and self-reflection is unavoidable. The self-psychology of Heinz Kohut provides a frame for understanding this attraction and its importance to educators who have the public interest at heart. The clinical practice of Kohut and his followers throughout North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand has found that introspection enhances empathy, which in turn renders human understanding and compassion more likely (Strozier 2001). Educational autobiography, then, is not merely a solipsistic exercise, but can serve as an awakening to a deeper level of teaching, as is evidenced in Chapter 8.

Peter Hilton's autobiographical Chapter 8 is a story of inspiration. Through a series of what Eric Voegelin (2000) calls "anamnetic exercises" he recalls moments in his life that have made significant differences to him and those around him, in his and their way of being in the world. The chapter reveals how literacy comes to some of us in highly particular ways through the caring and hope-filled persistence of particular people, how reading widely and deeply moves some of us to teach others with passion and empathy, and how permitting the muse to guide us enables us to in turn be an inspiration to others. It is a chapter that both embodies and explicates the mythopoetic in pedagogy.

In Chapter 9 Patricia Cranton uses stories from her own practice in the university to tell how disrespectful it is to ignore soul while paying homage at the altar of institutional policies and procedures and mandated curricula. For Cranton, mythopoetic pedagogy is practised through reciprocal story-telling, creating and beholding artistic work, and crafting evocative experiences. The chapter shows how imagination and mythopoesis can create joyful learning and enable teachers and students to connect deeply and meaningfully with each other.

The first nine chapters of the book are, of course, fairly theoretical, and, while some theory remains in the last half of the book, its focus is more on the field, on schools and institutions that take the opportunity to practice the principles of imaginative and mythopoetic education.

James Bradbeer and Abdul Ghafoor Abdul Raheem teach humanities in an Islamic secondary school in Melbourne, Australia. In Chapter 10 they write of their work with students brought up in a rigid orthodoxy who, growing into adulthood, begin to sense contradictions between the received truths of their religion and their lived experience of the world. "Because it is impossible to prove God, there is no answer but to make oneself capable of God," Abdul Ghafoor quotes Henry Corbin's interpretation of the Sufi Ibn 'Arabi. This quotation sets up the tension experienced by both teachers and students in all schools, not just those in religious schools. How can teachers support students in their quest for truth and at the same time hold them to an acceptance of received truths that they sense may be, in fact, not true at all? The authors' answer to this question is that the task of teaching is to help make students capable of truth. The unique pedagogy for making students capable of truth is the mythopoetic, and Bradbeer and Abdul Ghafoor tell stories of how this pedagogy proceeds in their classrooms.

The songlines of Australian Aborigines are drenched with meaning. Nothing in their world is merely material. The material and the spiritual are wholly bound up in each other. In Chapter 11, Rod Fawns inventively unpacks this mythical vision and demonstrates its significance in the field-based education of science teachers. Thus he confirms Aidan Davison's view in Chapter 4 that all teachers are bearers of myth. In addition, Fawns shows that the materials teachers use in the science classroom are not mere replaceable instruments for the delivery of instruction, but hum with their own rich messages derived from a range of myth-making communities of discourse. In this way he also confirms the notion developed in Chapter 6 that science education can be viewed as "wildest dreams" examined in communities of inquirers.

Chapters 12 and 13 represent the realm of religious education, which has a natural affinity with mythopoesis. Using an autobiographical technique similar to that of Peter Hilton, Leona English tells the story of three sources of inspiration in her life: the leaders of the Antigonish Movement, which worked to improve the lives of fishermen and farmers; a group of thirteenth-century Christian mystics whose deep spirituality led them to challenge power and inequity; and the spirituality of Sharon Butala, a naturalist mystic who has spent decades learning from the prairies of Saskatchewan. Contemplating these sources, English sets out principles and practices for adult education such as negative capability, tolerance of fluidity, and

appreciative inquiry. As she explains the power of these principles, English affirms the centrality of reflective practice and contemplation.

Fr. Gerry Healey then tells the story of how an institution, the Society of Jesus, has worked worldwide to maintain the fundamental inspiration of its origins when formal membership in the organization is in serious decline. The project he describes aims to maintain the characteristic Jesuit vision of education in a time when there are very few Jesuit teachers in their schools. As membership of the society began to decline it was thought to be sufficient to tell lay teachers what this characteristic vision is and that they should communicate it to their students. When it became apparent that this approach was not working, the society turned to more intensely mythopoetic measures to inspire their teachers with the Jesuit vision. The evaluation of these newer approaches, which Healey describes, is quite persuasive. Chapter 13 provides a dramatic illustration of the power of mythopoetic pedagogy to move beyond the overly simple approach of "delivering instruction."

Writing from the perspective of counselor education, in Chapter 14 Frances MacKay illuminates the relevance of mythopoesis to pedagogy as well as counseling, and does it in a way that inspires both intellect and passion. At various parts of this chapter the mythopoetically inclined reader might want to leap up and say "yea, that's right," or "that's clear," or "this really fits." Especially moving is her use of imagination as inspiring scientific investigation as well as the arts. She could have well added mathematics, music, and dance, but that would have been another chapter. The chapter puts one in mind of Antonio Damasio's *Descartes' error* (1996), which confirms the truth of MacKay's chapter from a formal neurobiological perspective. MacKay holds that mythopoesis provides a deeper layer in a person's self-narrative that challenges the divide between *mythos* and *logos*.

Brenton Prosser, in Chapter 15, directly confronts the inadequacy of critical theory, when it emphasizes the rationality of its approach to such an extent that it ignores imagination and emotion. Through reporting research among teachers in an impoverished area of South Australia, Prosser synthesizes critical theory and mythopoesis in a manner that complements the claims of Garman and Holland in Chapter 1, and demonstrates the power of mythopoesis to perform both its demystifying and demythologizing functions in the education of teachers.

When the editors first read Mary Doll's Chapter 16, "Capacity and *currere*," we recalled the claim ascribed to Diogenes, "Nothing human is alien to me." In a powerfully moving way, Mary uses Shakespeare, Hillman, Edward Albee, and Toni Morrison to make the reader aware of the depth and breadth of what it means to be human. We do not want to give the story away, but it speaks directly to the fact that self-awareness brings with it the ability to imagine and embrace the other. This makes it possible for self-aware teachers to bring full humanity to the classroom.

The image of head, heart, and hands has been integral to western spiritual practice at least since the seventeenth-century work of Jean Jacques Olier (Walsh 1949), and perhaps reaches back to the Cappadocian Fathers' reflections upon the Holy Trinity (Armstrong 1994). In Chapter 17, Tom Stehlik summons this image to mind as he integrates the Waldorf education of Rudolph Steiner into the conversation about mythopoesis and imagination in pedagogy. Stehlik shows how Waldorf

education grounds the development of mind in the development of imagination, thus affirming that mind is a function of imagination rather than imagination being a function of mind. This chapter describes the way Waldorf education cultivates the imagination of the young to provide them a firm emotional foundation upon which to build a sound intellectual life.

In the eighteenth chapter Peter Willis nicely rounds out the book by describing a specific application of mythopoesis to adult vocational education in a way that echoes much of what has been developed in the earlier chapters. The image of head, heart, and hands reappears. Willis considers the engagement of the whole person through story-telling, sociodrama, dialogue, and a carefully organized set of evocative experiences as an example of mythopoetic pedagogy in the preparation of teachers and health professionals. The combination of what Willis calls "expressive phenomenology" and "mythopoetic reflection" is described as a pedagogy that moves the mind and heart of human sector professionals so that they, as he says, "get a feel" for the work.

The authors of this book are truly an international assemblage, coming from Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. As they have drawn upon sources ancient and modern, readers are likely to recognize old ideas and practices and have a sense of déjà vu. Mythopoesis is truly an ancient form of education. Yet there is something new here. Each chapter reaches in its own unique way to integrate the imaginative world of teachers and students with the specific conditions of a post-industrialized English-speaking world. That world, in general, offers an unimaginative and ultimately mindless educational system that serves multinational corporate interests at the expense of working people, the poor, and their children. In our view, mythopoesis, if properly revived in educational practice, offers a way of synthesizing the best of both progressive and critical approaches to education in this cultural context.

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Part I
Mythopoesis and Curriculum Theorizing

Chapter 2
Watching with Two Eyes: The Place of the Mythopoetic in Curriculum Inquiry

Patricia E. Holland and Noreen B. Garman

Abstract This chapter begins with a discussion of Macdonald's understanding of the mythopoetic as a methodology for creating curriculum knowledge. Next, the authors link the mythopoetic to two schools of hermeneutic thought alluded to by Macdonald in his earlier work. They explain how these two schools produce a schism in curriculum studies that leads in one direction toward the works of critical theorists (as demystifying), and in another direction toward the works of interpretivists (as demythologizing). They then develop the argument that both of these hermeneutic schools use mythopoetic expression to articulate their ideas. The authors conceptualize the mythopoetic by examining myth as a source of knowledge that shapes our routine actions, and by examining the expressive powers of language that invokes the poetic and uses it to communicate mythic knowledge. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the authors recognize those who embody the mythopoetic in their writing, including curriculum theorists identified with both critical and interpretive approaches, as well as those who live with children in classrooms. These writers help us both to understand the mythopoetic as a force in curriculum, and to experience its power to shape our sensations, feelings, and impulses to act.

Introduction

> And twofold always. May God us keep
> From single vision and Newton's sleep. (William Blake, Letter to Thos. Butts, 22 November 1802, in Blake 1988, p. 722)

It is more than fifteen years since we wrote an earlier version of this chapter for publication in the *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* (1992). Since that time, we have been aware of a handful of curriculum scholars who have invoked the mythopoetic. What we have seen in their work is not so much that they attempt to define the mythopoetic, which remains elusively below the horizon of rationalism, but rather that they consistently locate the mythopoetic within the symbols, images, and metaphors contained in narratives. We also have been aware of the different curricular ends that these scholars envision as being served by explorations of the mythopoetic in narratives.

T. Leonard, P. Willis (eds.), *Pedagogies of the Imagination,*

Chet Bower (1995), for example, invokes the mythopoetic in the context of narratives that express ways of knowing within particular cultures. He argues for the importance of recognizing patterns of relationships and interdependencies that are assumed by dominant cultural narratives in order to choose or shape narratives that further a curriculum for ecojustice. Kathleen Kesson (1999) and Mary Doll (2000), on the other hand, see the mythopoetic at work in the narratives of educators. Their purposes for exploring the mythopoetic are to uncover the tacit meanings that shape curriculum (Kesson) and learning (Doll), and to encourage educators to use these insights to reclaim their voice in curricular discourse. As Kesson, and also Peter Willis (2005), recognize, such explorations of the mythopoetic have the emancipatory potential to forge and strengthen democratic communities among educators.

We have come to think of the work of those scholars who have written about the mythopoetic in this last decade and a half as heroic. They have gone against the grain of much of the current discourse in education that portrays curriculum as a tool for instrumentalist purposes of control and uniformity. While, on the surface, they focus on different curricular ends served by explorations of the mythopoetic, the work of these scholars has a unifying purpose of creating an—albeit modest—meta-discourse about curriculum that infiltrates the current horizon of expectations to expose deeply archetypal individual and cultural elements that shape an understanding of curriculum. We are proud to rejoin their ranks as we revisit our earlier efforts to articulate a conception of the mythopoetic in curriculum inquiry.

A Question of Meaning

Early in the writing of this chapter, we could have titled it "In search of the mythopoetic." It is a compelling term, and when Bill Pinar used "mythopoetic" to describe a curriculum genre and writers associated with it, the term caught our attention. Although Pinar used the term in the introduction to *Contemporary curriculum discourses* (Pinar 1988a), he never really indicated what he thought it meant.[1]

It was James Macdonald, we discovered, who used "mythopoetic" in his thinking about the state of curriculum theorizing. In his 1981 article "Theory, practice and the hermeneutic circle" Macdonald argues that curriculum theory is a search to understand the realities of educational events. As such, the search is experienced in the hermeneutic process. The mythopoetic, according to Macdonald, has its own epistemological implication for curriculum inquiry. He mentions science and critical theory as two methodologies (or, rather, epistemological approaches) for creating curriculum knowledge, but posits "a third methodology; that of the mythopoetic imagination" (1981, p. 134).

[1] In a later telephone conversation, Bill Pinar told us that he borrowed the term "mythopoetic" from James Macdonald's 1981 article.

As we thought about the way in which Pinar and Macdonald used the notion of the mythopoetic, we were disturbed. "Mythopoetic" has an intriguing resonant quality. It conjures up visions of eloquent language and elegant ideas. It seemed to us to provide the linguistic form and melody of hermeneutic expression. Both scholars, we decided, had too narrow a view of its potential. By separating the mythopoetic writers from the critical theorists, for instance, a major flaw occurs in the process of differentiating. First, both groups ground their scholarship in hermeneutic thought and, second, the language of both has more in common than not. We were certain both groups shared mythopoetic expression.

So we embarked on a search for a broader understanding of the mythopoetic in curriculum inquiry. We were searching for a conceptual version of "mythopoetic" that would help curriculum scholars better understand the nature of their work.

At first we thought that we could point to Macdonald's use of the term and give a short introduction from his 1981 article. After such a brief tip of the hat to Macdonald, we could then move on to the literature of philosophy and literary criticism for the rest of the paper. This was not possible. We found that we had to revisit the major words of James Macdonald as well as others' writings about his intellectual accomplishments.[2] It was clear that he not only wrote about the mythopoetic; he embodied it in his intellectual being. It is the sound of his eloquent language and elegant ideas that guide us in the following sections.

Revisiting Macdonald's Personal and Intellectual History

Near the end of what was to be his abbreviated life, James Macdonald proposed that the "mythopoetic imagination" (Macdonald 1981) offers a means of expression for curriculum theorizing. This proposal reflects what was to be the final evolution of his thinking about the philosophical bases for curriculum inquiry beyond an early phase in which he admits to being "much enamored with taxonomics, general systems theory, and technical schemes such as the 'Tyler rationale and behavioral objectives' " (Pinar 1975, p. 3).

Tracing the biographical history that led Macdonald from an empiricist's infatuation with the technical aspects of curriculum study, to embrace a richly complex hermeneutic notion of curriculum theorizing that could include such an unruly aesthetic notion as the mythopoetic, reveals a transformation that was both personal and intellectual. Fortunately, his writing chronicles this transformation. For instance, in a biographical statement prepared for Pinar's *Curriculum theorizing: the reconceptualists* (1975), Macdonald describes the "two major value themes" that influenced his work:

[2] See, for example, Burke (1985). In the same issue of the journal, scholars Michael Apple, Madeleine Grumet, Dwayne Huebner, Alex Molnar, William Pinar, Susan Stinson, and Bernice Wolfson all honor James Macdonald with personal reflections. These essays collectively provide excellent examples of mythopoetic writings. See also Brubaker and Brookbank (1986).

> One has been expressed in a desire to construct intellectually satisfying conceptual maps of the human condition which were educationally meaningful and personally satisfying. The second has been expressed in a utopian hope that somehow people could improve the quality of their existence, specifically through educational processes and generally through broader social policy. (Pinar 1975, p. 3)

It was, as Macdonald admits, the first of these values that dominated his early career. The second found full voice when he encountered the work of Habermas and, in it, a hermeneutic methodology. In a piece entitled "Curriculum and human interests" he says of this experience:

> During the past year I have discovered a book that might have been written specifically for me at this time, that is, it spoke to me as only a few books can in a lifetime … Somehow the cultural content and my personal interests were "matched." At any rate, the book, by Jurgen Habermas, is called *Knowledge and Human Interests*. (Macdonald 1975, pp. 285–286)

Reading Macdonald's description of his discovery of Habermas and the hermeneutic, one can sense the excitement of the "aha" experience, of the transformative power hermeneutic methodology gave him to account for what had seemed previously unaccountable questions of personal or, in his words, "utopian" values in curriculum theorizing. The hermeneutic perspective afforded him a broader philosophical base from which to think about approaches to curriculum theorizing in a way that would allow for interpretive and critical processes.

While under the influence of Habermas, Macdonald continued to think of the hermeneutic in methodological terms, as "a self-reflective science" whose exemplary model can be found in the relationship between theory and practice in psychoanalysis. This relationship of praxis, based as it is in a methodology of critical theory, holds that knowledge as theory is generated and used in practice to serve human interests, particularly those allowing people to transcend or overthrow confining social practices and conventions. Over time, however, as he continued to explore the literature of hermeneutics Macdonald found this methodological relationship between theory and practice still did not account for all that was implied as human experience within his utopian value. As he put it, "Habermas does not deal adequately with the aesthetic" (Macdonald 1981, p. 135).

His investigation of hermeneutics engaged him in the schism in modern hermeneutics between Habermas's methodological orientation and a rival line of thinking deriving from Heidegger and developed by Ricoeur and Gadamer in which hermeneutics is not an epistemological system of rules and methods that exists outside of some lived experience, but rather is the ontological process of understanding and interpreting the world as it is experienced. Rather than taking an either/or position and accepting one notion of hermeneutics over the other, Macdonald proposed a separate methodology of the mythopoetic imagination which he called the "poetic method." This poetic method would be concerned with a form of knowledge distinct from that of either science or critical theory; it would, in other words be a third paradigm that would explore and express the aesthetic dimensions of human experience. Macdonald says that the poetic method is

> particularly related to the use of insight, visualization and imagination, which is essentially separate from science and praxis … it is perhaps best called the methodology of "so what?" Its search is for meaning and a sense of unity and well-being. (Macdonald 1981, p. 134)

Three Paradigms of Inquiry: Sorting out Educational Traditions

The evolution of the philosophical themes in Macdonald's work parallels the evolution of the field of educational inquiry in general. By the beginning of the 1980s, it was clear that other scholars, bothered by the inadequacy of positivism as the dominant mode of inquiry, were attempting to sort out the different languages and logics of educational research. Dual terms such as qualitative/quantitative, naturalistic/empirical, positivist/constructivist suggested the early attempts to move away from a scientific (or rather scientistic) approach. By contrasting the positivist orientation with hermeneutically oriented positions, educators sought to break from the tight grip of positivist thinking. The 1980s would bring a concern for inquiry into the human intersubjective meanings of educational events.

One of the most influential articles to attempt the sorting out of educational traditions was Jonas Soltis's "On the nature of educational research" (1984). His perspective draws from the roots of three dominant twentieth-century philosophic positions as laid out by Bernstein (1976): logical empiricism (positivism); interpretive theories (analytic, phenomenological, and hermeneutic); and critical theory (neo-Marxist). Soltis argues that educational events are characterized by empirical (causal), interpretive (meaningful), and critical (normative) dimensions, and hence need to be studied from within these three traditions. This triadic classification is a generally accepted distinction useful in characterizing the traditions of educational inquiry.

Earlier, Macdonald (1981) had argued that the bipolar scientific and critical theory categorizations were not sufficient. He also argued for a triadic classification, naming the three categories as science, critical theory, and poetics. In that article, Macdonald's classification establishes a more inclusive recognition of hermeneutic philosophy than does Soltis's, which places hermeneutics in the interpretive position only. Macdonald recognized the schism of modern hermeneutics, which represents the breach between the interpretive and critical paradigms. In other words, both paradigms are grounded in hermeneutic inquiry, albeit from different philosophic schools of thought.

In this study we argue that Macdonald's inclusive notion of hermeneutic inquiry is important as the basis from which to begin to recover the mythopoetic. We contend, however, contrary to Macdonald's position, that both hermeneutic paradigms, the interpretive and critical, use "myth" as a source of knowledge and the language of "poetics" as a means of expression.

It remains then to examine what these constructs of "myth" and "poetics" might mean if they are used to delineate a rigorous process of educational inquiry with specific reference to curriculum theorizing.

The Two Eyes of Myth in the Hermeneutic

It was said in the old days that every year Thor made a circle around Middle Earth, beating back the enemies of order. Thor got older every year, and the circle occupied by gods and men grew smaller. The wisdom god, Woden, went out to the king

of the trolls, put him in an arm lock, and demanded to know how order might triumph over chaos. "Give me your left eye," said the king of the trolls, "and I'll tell you." Without hesitation, Woden gave up his left eye. "Now tell me," said Woden. And the troll replied, "The secret is, watch with both eyes!"[3]

So it is with the mythic in the hermeneutic quest. Drawing from Ricoeur, Macdonald (1981) alludes only briefly to the duality within hermeneutic thought (or, as we have painted it, the "two eyes" of the mythic quest). He suggests that one is "focused upon the restoration of meaning" and the other "on the reduction of illusion" (p. 132). Palmer (1969) describes these two different mythic stances in modern philosophical thought as demystification and demythologizing. Demystification refers to an approach that seeks to destroy the traces (or symbols) of myth as the representation of false reality. Demythologizing represents the notion of treating the symbols in a respectful fashion in order to recover meanings hidden in them. Palmer quotes Ricoeur in making this significant distinction: "The demythologizers treat the symbol as sacred reality: the demystifiers treat the same symbol as a false reality that must be shattered" (1969, p. 44). Because of these two antithetical approaches to the interpretation of symbols today, Ricoeur (1979) asserts that there can be no universal canons for exegesis, but only separate and opposing theories regarding interpretation of myth. In our view, the two eyes provide the necessary vision for fuller understanding.

Still, like Woden's ironic sacrifice for wisdom, modern educational theorists argue over which eye will best serve their inquiry, missing the point that both the interpretive (demythologizing) and the critical (demystifying) approaches are required for a complete range of vision and adequate depth perception.

Recovering the Mythopoetic

Perhaps the best way to proceed in developing an understanding of what the "mythopoetic" means is to recognize the two separate concepts, myth and poetic, that are joined in the term, and to consider the nature of the implied relationship between them.

Thus to begin with myth, the premise put forth by scholars of myth such as Campbell, Cassirer, and Eliade, is that myth is a source of knowledge (see also Garman 1983; Holland 1983). Having acknowledged its epistemological status, the difficulty of describing mythical knowledge, because it differs so radically from the knowledge of science and reason, quickly becomes apparent. Cassirer, for example, admits that

> Myth is non-theoretical in its very meaning and essence. It defies and challenges our fundamental categories of thought. Its logic—if there is any logic—is incommensurate with all our conceptions of empirical or scientific truth. (Cassirer 1944, p. 73)

[3] We borrowed the Woden "Myth of two eyes" from Gardner (1978).

Despite this caveat, however, Cassirer (and later Campbell) suggests that myth as a "symbolic form" contains the contents of the mind. According to Cassirer:

> It may be said of any symbolic form, of language, art or myth … that each of these is a particular way of seeing and carries within itself its particular and proper source of light. (Cassirer 1944, p. 79)

As for what the mind contains that myth depicts, the best response might be that it is multi-layered meaning. It is what Joseph Campbell describes as the potential for myth to be interpreted on various levels, from the local scenery to the "universal being, which is Everyman, as he both knows and is afraid to know" (Campbell 1959, p. 472).

What distinguishes interpretations of myth as knowledge is their call to action. That action may be what Nelson Goodman (1978) calls "world making" in the creation of language that symbolically portrays some truth of human experience, or it may be the exercise of a socializing function, the setting forth of norms for belief or behavior both for the holder and the bearer of myth. In either case, myth functions as knowledge in the sense captured by Lindblom and Cohen's notion of usable knowledge: "knowledge is knowledge to anyone who takes it as a basis for some commitment to action" (1979, p. 12).

Considerations of the interpretation of myth introduce the concept of the poetic, and its concern for the nature of the language through which mythical knowledge is construed. The association of myth with language has been a focus for scholars of myth for over a century, perhaps reaching its extreme with Levi-Strauss's (1963) structural analogies between myth and language. The linking of myth specifically with poetic language is important because it recognizes the denotative and connotative power that resides within language. The language of the mythopoetic conveys what Cassirer describes as

> the basic supposition [which] is that word and name do not merely have a function of describing or portraying but contain within them the object and its real powers. Word and name do not designate and signify, they are and act. (Cassirer 1955, p. 40)

Macdonald's explanation of "the more personalized and uniquely biographical manner" (1981, p. 135) required to capture the mythopoetic includes both the tacit and personal nature of the mythic as a source of knowledge, and the notion of poetics as the expressive form for communicating this knowledge:

> Here, broadly speaking, insights, images, and imaginative (or speculative) symbolizations are created as possible meaning structures. These meaning structures are however created as much or more by the concrete and practical experience of the participant in relation to the symbols, as they are in the coherence of the symbolic structure itself. The process of self-reflection in this case is the reflection upon the self, not reflection on the theory in a critical theory mode. (Macdonald 1981, p. 135)

Macdonald's explanation includes both the tacit and personal nature of the mythical as a source of knowledge, and the notion of poetics as the expressive form for communicating this knowledge. Mythic knowledge derives from the unconscious self in wordless communication with its own apprehension of the elemental human life force; it is a sensing of sacred truth about the human experience. This sensing of

myth is a particular way of knowing, distinct from the symbolic forms of language and ritual which interpret myth and become its expression, its rendering into some communicable form. As forms of expression are superimposed on the sense of myth, then that which is apprehended in myth is made accessible to consciousness as—to borrow again from Macdonald—"personal awareness, insight and vision for self-reflection" (Macdonald 1981, p. 136).

The Power(s) of the Mythopoetic

In subsequent sections of this article we have turned to scholars in literary criticism to help illuminate the meaning of the mythopoetic. Iser (1974) reminds us that, all too often, literary criticism has been concerned with the author's point of view, paying little attention to how the reader might be affected. He advocates a perspective in which a text would be studied according to the influence it exercises over the reader—that is, the means of communication by which the reader is brought into contact with the reality represented by the author. Iser draws from Kenneth Burke's distinction between the terms "semantic meaning" and "poetic meaning." "Semantic meaning" attempts to find a description by the elimination of attitude. "Poetic meaning," on the other hand, is intended "to awaken specific attitudes in the reader by what Burke calls the 'strategy of communication' " (Iser 1974, p. 57). It is important to note that Burke equates the term "poetic" with the effect, or rather the power, a text has upon the reader.

Mythopoetic expression has a particular kind of power. As we have emphasized earlier, the power derives from mythic knowing embodied in forms of human communication. We could say, inspired by Rousseau, that human communication is a social contract based on subliminal laws, and that a culture's myths contain its semantic jurisprudence (Maranda 1980). Mythopoetic power represents a force that guides the reader to a vivid understanding through expression. We are suggesting here that, in order to understand the power of mythopoetic expression, we must begin to delineate particular powers of the mythopoetic, that is, powers that are described here as reflexive, moral, controlling, and evocative in their expression.

Reflexive Power

Reflection, and in particular self-reflection, is a major theme in hermeneutic writings. It is what Gadamer (1975) describes as the self-understanding that derives from the human sciences. Habermas (1979) assumes that human beings have an emancipatory interest—an interest in securing freedom from distorted communication. This interest, according to Habermas, is grounded in humans' capacity for rational action and self-conscious reasoning. Rational language, however, is often associated with expressions from the world of empirical inquiry. We argue that it is

the mythopoetic that gives power to the language of self-understanding within hermeneutic expression.

The literary critic Northrop Frye (1963) reminds us that any discussion of the "poetic" has to begin with the field that it works in, the field described by Aristotle as "nature." The poet Wallace Stevens (1951) calls it "reality" by which he means not simply the external world, but the taken-for-granted world in which "things are as they are." It is ordinary human life on the level of absorption in routine activity. As Frye points out:

> Human intelligence can resist routine by arresting it in an act of consciousness, but the normal tendency of routine is to work against consciousness. The revolution of consciousness against routine is the starting point of all mental activity, and the center of mental activity is imagination, the power of transforming *reality* into awareness of reality. (1963, p. 239, emphasis added)

The mythopoetic author's primary obedience, however, is not to reality but to the "the violence from within" of the imagination that resists and arrests it (Stevens 1951). The minimum basis of imagination, so to speak, is ironic realism, the act of simply becoming aware of the surrounding pressures of "things as they are." This develops a sense of alienation, which is the immediate result of imposing consciousness on reality. This "act of mind" is where imagination begins. It captures and combines perceptions of the world that lie beyond the individual and also internal impressions of that world (Frye 1963). In that act there is born the principle of form or order. Like the image of Woden in the allegory of two eyes, the inner violence of the imagination is a rage for order. It is the mythopoetic expression that engages the "act of mind" and helps to bring order to the sense of chaos and alienation. In expressing the mythic in our daily lives, the mythopoetic gives significance to routine activity in a very special way. As Kathleen Berry says, "The mythological … moves us into regions of respect and amazement of ourselves being in the world" (1989, p. 5)

Moral Power

If science is the language of detachment, mythology is the language of concern. Myths humanize rather than imitate reality, turning, for instance, the passage from winter to spring into a drama of death and rebirth that obviously has greater moral and emotional appeal than a weather forecaster's chart (Fischer 1985). Although the mythopoetic violates scientific standards of objective expression, it nevertheless creates a world that Frye (1970) can at times call reality. As he says, "The world, that is, the human world, has constantly to be created, and the one model on which we must not create it is that of the world out there. The world out there has no human values, hence we should think of it primarily as absurd" (1970, p. 51). In other words, when we ask that myths correspond to the "world out there," we refuse to accept that humans create their world anew from a moral conscience. We cannot have it fit something outside itself.

Mythopoetic expression is moral language. It speaks about the rightness of good conduct and the consequences of evil action, both individual and institutional. It has implicit, as well as explicit, normative nuance. "The very wellspring of ethical behavior," writes Nel Noddings, "is in human affective response" (1984, p. 3). She argues that feeling is a necessary part of moral decisions. If we are aware of ourselves as personal constructs with an ethical ideal, we shall be able to make moral choices from within the circular (reflective) relations of caring. There is a moral imperative in caring and, in return, mythopoetic language gives moral power for generating a caring spirit. In a curriculum challenge, Starratt (1989) calls this power "knowing at the level of sympathy," which involves an appreciation of the world and learning how to make it a better place for the whole human family. Moral power, then, is the mythopoetic expression of individual and social responsibility.

Controlling Power

Perhaps "control" is too harsh a word to describe the rather subtle rhetorical influence of mythopoetic language on the audience. Certainly it can be claimed from such a rhetorical perspective that the purpose of mythopoetic language is to channel the ways in which the reader or listener responds to what is written or said. Such a claim, however, does not distinguish mythopoetic language from any other form of linguistic expression, in that all language directs its audience's attention and responses. Distinguishing the mythopoetic as a particular form of rhetorical functioning illuminates those aspects of control that separate it from a generic view in which rhetoric is seen as

> the study of the ways in which character and community—and motive, value, reason, social structure, everything, in short, that makes a culture—are defined and made real in performance of language. (White 1984, p. xi)

The controlling power of mythopoetic language is its unique ability to prescribe the way in which the myth it embodies will be treated. The reader or listener is directed by implicit cues in the language to adopt what has been described above as either a demystifying or a demythologizing view of the work—those "two eyes" of the hermeneutic. Seeing through the eye of demystification focuses the reader or listener on emancipatory interests inherent in critical theory, while the eye of demythologizing directs her/him to an interpretive focus and a consideration of sacred truths and universal meanings. Thus, the controlling power of mythopoetic language would seem not to be that such language indicates its own unique methodology, as Macdonald had posited, but rather that it has the power to control which methodological perspective—which eye of the hermeneutic—the reader or listener will employ.

Evocative Power

The notion of the evocative is inherent within the poetic. This quality comes from allusiveness, incorporating the texture of echoes, rhythms, names, and thoughts

derived from the shared experience of author and audience. The "poetic" normally expresses itself in what one might loosely call word magic; it is the power of evocation, charm in its original sense of spell, to reinforce the "act of mind" with dream-like reverberations, to echo and enlarge the significance of memory and the unconscious. Through this power of evocation the mythopoetic invokes and engages the imagination.

Analysis of the evocative power of the mythopoetic recognizes its relationship to what Jerome Bruner has described as the "narrative mode of thought." He distinguishes narrative from paradigmatic thought, which he says leads to "good theory, tight analysis, logical proof, sound argument, and empirical discovery guided by reasoned hypothesis" (Bruner 1986, p. 13). The narrative on the other hand is the product of imagination, not reason, and yields

> good stories, gripping drama, believable (though not necessarily "true") historical accounts. It deals in human or human-like intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course. (Bruner 1986, p. 13)

As Bruner uses it, "narrative" describes the form of the text produced by the imagination; we would add that "mythopoetic" describes the nature of the language used within that form.

The evocative power of the mythopoetic is also related to what Paulo Freire (2000) calls "dangerous words." In Freire's context and concern for emancipation words like "policeman," "landlord," and "lease" have about them rich clusters of allusive connotation; they are perceived viscerally and carry with them a threat to tidy realms of reason and order. Kozol, in his recent *Illiterate America*, speaks to the need for dangerous words and their evocative power:

> These are precisely the allusive words that people need to use if they are to find avenues of exit from the crowded prisons of their souls, to give voice to their longings, to give both lease and license to their rage. (Kozol 1985, p. 134)

While the notion of "dangerous words" is associated with the methodology of critical theory, words similarly rich in their power to command attention are found within the interpretive realm. In fact, it is common to think that language having evocative power is a characteristic only of interpretive works. As we argue, however, such power resides in mythopoetic language itself, and this language can be found in both the critical and interpretive paradigms.

A final point to be made about the evocative power of the mythopoetic is that it is intended to provoke action. It does so by appealing to emotion and eliciting response at an emotional as well as a rational level. The emotions that are so evoked implicitly dictate what action must be taken to satisfy them. Thus the critical theorist employs the mythopoetic to direct the reader toward emancipation, to action intended to gain freedom from the power of myth by denouncing it as a false reality. The interpretivist, on the other hand, uses the mythopoetic to encourage the reader to recover the sacred meaning of myth as it expresses essential human experience. In doing so there may be "dysfunctions" that surface. However, these do not deny the essential respect for myth itself.

In our attempt to recover an understanding of "mythopoetic" we have discovered that the mythopoetic includes both the tacit and personal nature of the mythical as

a source of knowledge, and the notion of poetics as the expressive form for communicating that knowledge. Mythopoetic writers call forth the power of this expression to create their texts. And, as in literary text, effects and responses are properties neither of the text nor of the reader; the text represents a potential effect that is realized in the reading process (Iser 1978). We have articulated this "potential effect" as mythopoetic powers—reflexive, moral, controlling, and evocative powers—that flow between the text and the reader. They bring into play the imaginative and perceptive faculties of the author and the reader in concert. In the following section we illustrate that the mythopoetic depends on the participation of the reader. Our object is not to explain the works but rather to reveal the conditions that bring about the various possible effects in mythopoetic writings.

Mythopoetic Writing

In his edited collection, *Contemporary curriculum discourses*, William Pinar points to "mytho-poetical" work as its own category of curriculum writing. He implies that such writing falls outside the categories of "political" works, which most often reflect a critical orientation to inquiry, and also outside the "aesthetic" and "phenomenological" categories, which have interpretive orientations (Pinar 1988a, p. 7). Pinar's distinction, which at first seems a rather minor classification decision, has serious implications in its separation of poetic expressions of myth from their hermeneutic traditions.

For us Pinar's distinction raises a flag. It not only sidetracks curriculum writers such as Haggerson, Krall, the late Ronald Padgham, and others from the main paradigms of educational and curriculum inquiry, it also suggests that the mythopoetic is not to be found in texts that Pinar would place in other categories such as the (critically oriented) political, or the (interpretively oriented) aesthetic and phenomenological.

In our efforts to recover the mythopoetic as an expressive form that exists within a notion of the hermeneutic that includes both interpretive and critical traditions, we have first located the mythopoetic as a concept for curriculum theorizing in the work of Macdonald, and then explicated the nature and powers of the mythopoetic in the abstract. It now remains to illustrate within representative writings the functioning of those powers that we have described as characterizing the mythopoetic.

Pinar (1988a) mentions Nelson Haggerson as a mythopoetic writer, and it is clear that Haggerson's Macdonald-Prize-winning paper, "Reconceptualizing inquiry in curriculum: using multiple research paradigms to enhance the study of curriculum" (1988) is a vivid example. In it he invites the reader to undertake a journey with overtones of a mythic quest. Using the metaphor of the "stream" to represent the domain of curriculum, the mythopoetic power of the text resides primarily in its ability to allow the reader to experience reflexively the stream from various inquiry perspectives. Haggerson also draws on the power of the mythopoetic to put forth a compelling moral agenda for researchers to understand and accept these differing inquiry paradigms as complementary rather than contradictory.

Florence Krall's piece "The shape of things in art, nature, and academia" (1985) exquisitely captures—as is characteristic of her work—the evocative power of the mythopoetic. Who, having heard or read this piece, fails to recall not the description but the experience of following the sensuous line of a Henry Moore sculpture, of holding fear in one's hand as a bloody severed penis of a grizzly bear, or of seeing in the polished gleam of the bear's penis bone a symbol of spiritual recovery and freedom from the misshapen forms of daily life. The non-linear flow of Krall's writing conveys her mythic sensing of the world, depicting it in terms of image and narrative that challenge rational analysis and yet, at the same time, communicates fully important universals of the lived human experience.

For both Haggerson and Krall the power of the mythopoetic is directed toward what Ricoeur (1970, p. 27) describes as a hermeneutic of restoration for demythologizing. The controlling power of the mythopoetic is used to influence the reader to uncover (or recover) previously hidden insights and meanings, and to reach a deeper comprehension of human experience and its relationship to curriculum theorizing. As such, both writers exemplify the mythopoetic used within the interpretive paradigm to further both their own and the readers' understanding of the sacred truths to which their writing hearkens.

While curriculum writers such as Haggerson and Krall, and others who work within the interpretive modes, use the mythopoetic as strong warp threads to shape the phenomenological fabric of their writing, writers within the critical tradition more often use the mythopoetic in subtle ways, like weft threads that give pattern and texture to the fabric of their work. A notable exception to this generalization is the work of Madeleine Grumet, wherein the mythopoetic is used expansively and extensively—a manner more characteristic of interpretivist writers—to explore critically dimensions of feminism in education, for example in Grumet's *Bitter milk: women and teaching* (1988). While works within the critical paradigm may require closer scrutiny to find the mythopoetic, such scrutiny is rewarded by evidence of how messages of social and political criticism are conveyed through the language used.

In order to recover a focus on the mythopoetic in critical writings we have chosen representative works of Michael Apple and Henry Giroux, two scholars generally recognized to be prolific, both in terms of their own writing and that of their respective students.

One of Apple's best known pieces is *The hidden curriculum and the nature of conflict* (1979). His discussion of how the essential nature of conflict in scientific and social communities is denied in science and social studies curricula reflects the subtle invocation of the powers of mythopoetic language. For instance, close reading reveals widespread use of powerfully evocative adjectives used to emphasize points in the discourse. Students are described as facing "complex and often repressive political realities and dynamics of power in their society" (1979, p. 79), social studies texts are acknowledged to have "over the years, presented a somewhat biased view of the true nature of the amount and possible use of internecine strife" (1979, p. 80), and students are forced to learn "a basically unrealistic and essentially conservative perspective on the usefulness of conflict" (1979, p. 82)

These few examples point to a larger effect of placing the reader within the text and reflexively engaging her/him in the very conflict that Apple decries the lack of in school curricula. They also point to the moral agenda of the piece, which is to bring the reader to care positively about the conflict that he/she is experiencing and to become indignant at the lack of intellectual honesty and political utility in curriculum. The reader is made ready to act to change this "hegemonic" state of affairs.

Apple leaves little to chance as to how his reader ought to respond. He lists several "programmatic suggestions" to control what actions are to be taken to "counterbalance the hidden curriculum and selective tradition most evident in science and social studies as representatives of the formal corpus of school knowledge" (1979, p. 93). The reader is thus led through the powers of mythopoetic language to the critical theorist's essential position of demystification in which the hidden denial of conflict in school curricula is viewed as promotion of a false reality that must be overturned.

Henry Giroux's use of the mythopoetic is more obvious than Apple's, in large part because Giroux's writing uses evocative language more broadly to effect its often overtly polemic tone. In an essay entitled "Liberal arts, teaching and critical literacy: towards a definition of schooling as a form of cultural politics" (1988), he summarizes ideas explored more fully in his book *Schooling for democracy: critical pedagogy in the public sphere* (1987). His chapter offers a good example of the ways in which Giroux employs the powers of mythopoetic expression.

In his calls for a "critical literacy"—what he describes as "a language of possibility that allows educators and others to rethink the meaning and purpose of education in this country" and for teachers to be "transformative intellectuals" (1988, p. 261)—Giroux sounds the rallying cries for the battle that must be waged to

> rescue the language of tradition, morality, and possibility from the militarists, ideological fundamentalists, and corporate technocrats who are more aggressive than ever in smothering those voices that do not represent their own interests and who treated the quality of life and civil liberties that need to be preserved and extended in this country. (1988, p. 261)

By such scathing delineation of the opposition and through numerous uses of the word "struggle" throughout the piece, the tone set is that of a moral crusade.

While the martial ring of this evocative language may be, at least in part, unintentional, the purpose it is to serve is not. It is intended to engage the reader in a winner-take-all struggle for schools as institutions that support and maintain Giroux's critical theorist view of democracy. The reader is invited to identify with and become the kind of transformative intellectual whose task it is to wage and win this battle. The critical literacy that is the most powerful weapon in this fight is, upon examination, a form of demystification used to smash any opposing arguments.

The previous discussion provides only a hint of the kind of analysis that is possible in an attempt to recover the mythopoetic in curriculum writings. Other critical theorists whose writing in the curriculum field reflects mythopoetic expression are (to mention only a few examples): Peter McLaren (1986), Ira Shor (1986), Cameron McCarthy (1988), Jean Anyon (1988), and Patti Lather (1985), best known for her feminist orientation. Interpretivists who also contribute to the feminist literature include Janet

Miller (1988) and Jo Anne Pagano (1988), who both use an autobiographical voice to capture the self-reflexive nature of the mythopoetic. Canadian David G. Smith (1988) takes a phenomenological perspective and another Canadian, Terry Carson (1989), defends the interpretive position in his writing. John Albertini and Bonnie Meath-Lang (1987) base their work in journal writing. Like many writers, Jacques Daignault (1983) cannot be characterized easily as either critical theorist or interpretivist. His writing reminds one of an Escher woodcut in that he writes with paradoxical metaphors and mind-bending images about curriculum. Prolific writers such as Elliot Eisner (1985), Maxine Greene (1988), as well as Max Van Manen (1986) and William Pinar (1988a, b) continue to use mythopoetic voices and remind us, in their messages, of the importance of the aesthetic response in curriculum inquiry.

Writers mentioned thus far are often identified as those who contribute primarily to curriculum theorizing. However, it is important to include in the list of mythopoetic writings those authors who are not generally associated with curriculum theory. We are thinking particularly about the stories of teachers about their classroom experiences. Stories told by teachers themselves include, for instance, Vivian Paley's *Walley stories* (1981) and Stuart Palonsky's *900 shows a year: a look at teaching from a teacher's side of the desk* (1986) as well as the second-hand accounts of Sondra Perl and Nancy Wilson, *Through teachers' eyes: portraits of writing teachers at work* (1986). Philosopher Gareth Matthews' *Dialogues with children* (1984) shows children's capacity to ponder profound questions and, of course, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot's *The good high school* (1983), Eleanor Duckworth's *The having of wonderful ideas* (1987), and Tracy Kidder's *Among schoolchildren* (1989) probe the souls of those who inhabit schools. In all of these writings, the authors have used vivid experiential accounts of the lived world. Each one has an ear for conversations and an eye for rich and significant detail. It is the mythopoetic that gives renewed life to their narratives.

The Journey Continues

This study has been a journey in search of the place of the mythopoetic in curriculum inquiry. As we began, we revisited the writings of James Macdonald because he spoke about the "mythopoetic imagination" and his intellectual journey seemed to give us the direction we needed. His road was the hermeneutic path. We took his advice about the relation of theory to practice:

> The test of "good" theory in practice is thus, not centrally that it works (i.e., that we can control practice), but that in the engagement of theory and practice we are emancipated from previous misunderstandings and are then freed to reinterpret situations and reach greater understandings. (1981, p. 133)

We chose to recover (or perhaps reinterpret) the possible meaning Macdonald had for "mythopoetic imagination." In a somewhat narrow framework, he posited that the poetic method should be considered as a third paradigm for curriculum inquiry distinct from science and critical theory. Yet he was most articulate in arguing that

the theory–practice relationship is a hermeneutic process. Theorizing, he said, is an act of creation: creating oneself and thereby eventually recreating the world. “There is a mystery to be probed, curiosity to be satisfied, confusion and ambiguity to be faced and lived with” (Macdonald 1982, p. 58).

We remind ourselves about the two schools of hermeneutic thought that Macdonald alludes to in his 1981 article. The schism leads in one direction toward Habermas’s methodological orientation including emancipation through self-understanding within the political and social worlds, and in another direction to a rival line of thinking deriving from Heidegger, developed by Ricoeur and Gadamer, in which hermeneutics is seen in the ontological process of understanding and interpreting the world as it is experienced. In curriculum writing this schism can be felt in the works of the critical theorist (as demystifying) and the interpretivists (as demythologizing). Our contention is that writers in both of these hermeneutic schools use mythopoetic expression to articulate their ideas.

In order to conceptualize the mythopoetic we visited the writings of Eliade, Cassirer, and Campbell, recognizing their comprehensive descriptions of the life-sustaining force of myth. From them we take as our assumption that myth is a source of knowledge that shapes our routine actions. It is, however, in understanding the power of poetics, especially through literary criticism, that we are able to articulate the expressive powers that poetics can take from communicating mythic knowledge. Mythopoetic power, we contend, includes reflexive, moral, controlling, and evocative powers that flow between the author and the reader.

Perhaps the most important visit we made was in order to recover the mythopoetic from those who embody it in their writing. Curriculum theorists identified with critical and interpretive approaches, as well as those who live with children in classrooms, provide us with the cases for understanding the power of the mythopoetic in curriculum writing.

We are convinced that an understanding of the mythopoetic in curriculum inquiry is essential. The language of education would be impoverished indeed if we accepted the vernacular of science as our sole means of expression. Scientific knowledge may provide us with a flattened version of facts. Mythopoetic expression is the essence of human intellect because it is in such expression that we find the sensations, feelings, and impulses to act. To engage in the mythopoetic search is to embark on a journey for greater understanding that motivates and satisfies us. As we see in the writings of Macdonald, even after his death on November 21, 1983, the journey never ends.

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Chapter 3
The Shadow of Hope: Reconciliation and Imaginal Pedagogies

Peter Bishop

Abstract By exploring the extreme demands that a reconciliation agenda places upon the imagination, this chapter maps and evaluates the possibilities for mythopoetic pedagogies. Such a move aims to work as a provocation for teachers in formal education systems and for cultural workers. Various calls to imagination within the literature of reconciliation are highlighted: the challenges faced in a double process of acknowledgement and forgiveness; the complexities of different ways of knowing/valuing and imagining in intercultural dialogue; the struggle over memory and how to imagine responsibility, shame, and grief; imagination's role in a reconciliation pedagogy; and re-imagining identity in postcolonial contexts. Mythopoetic pedagogies that lie outside the post-Enlightenment paradigm are introduced alongside dominant western critical theories of pedagogy and imagination. This is crucial due to the devaluation and marginalization of mythopoetics within the philosophies and pedagogies of modernity and postmodernity. The chapter includes a brief reflection upon some personal experiences in the practice and organization of a mythopoetic pedagogy, in order to develop an understanding of its limitations and possibilities when applied to a reconciliation agenda.

Preamble

This paper examines issues facing mythopoetic, or "imaginal," pedagogies in the context of a reconciliation process. By "imaginal" I am following Corbin's (1972) insistence on a form of imagination that is far more profound than just a faculty of individual creativity.

Much social reconciliation involves intercultural dialogues within postcolonial contexts and settler societies. Given this situation, it is appropriate to draw on the ideas and practices of mythopoetics that lie outside the post-Enlightenment paradigm that dominates contemporary western social sciences. I have no wish to reject this paradigm, only to decenter and relativize its claims to truth and universality. While this is crucial in a reconciliation context, it is equally important where mythopoetics is concerned, due to its devaluation and marginalization within the philosophies and pedagogies of modernity. To this extent, I draw on the notions of

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imagination in the theory, practice, and pedagogy of Buddhism (Longchenpa 1976) and Sufism (Corbin 1969, 1980). Also, I refer to the postcolonial work of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1986), a contemporary Kenyan novelist, playwright, and critical theorist, as well as to Gao Xingjian (2004), the Chinese novelist, playwright, and artist.

In terms of sustaining the hyphen between the imaginal and social justice (Hattam 2004), the work of critical utopian theorist Ernst Bloch (1986) is seminal, although perhaps limited to a focus on social class. Subsequent work on the question of a postcolonial imaginal brings critical focus to questions of race and gender, although often with little substance given to issues of the imaginal (Motsemme 2004; Lewis and Mills 2003). Studies of genocide and trauma gesture in the direction of imagination. Their key focus is often memory and, as will be seen, it is here that a more detailed engagement with the imaginal can occur (Hirsch 1995).

Among modern western theorists, Derrida and Heidegger have sustained significance for me, but I particularly want to acknowledge the work of James Hillman (1975, 1985) and numerous scholar-practitioners in the general field of archetypal psychology, for whom the Renaissance marks a watershed in the struggle for mythopoetics. This field of psychology also has its roots in the seminal work of C. G. Jung, Gaston Bachelard, Henry Corbin and especially that meticulous scholar of *ars memoria*, Francis Yates (1978).

Finally, there are numerous poets and writers of "fiction" whose work confirms Jung's observation: "How are fantasies made and what is their nature? From the poets we learn much, from the scientists little" (Jung 1978, para 33).

Reconciliation and Imagination

Reconciliation, as a social process, aims to break the cycle of revenge and heal the effects of traumatic events that produce guilt, anxiety, resentment, and injustice.[1] It involves a struggle toward dialogue, often in contexts of fear, anxiety, and even violence. It requires a re-imagining of reflexive or dialogical spaces for listening to silenced, anxious, or angry voices. It confronts what is often unspeakable or irreparable and gives rise to complex difficulties of narrating pain and trauma. It can be understood in terms of a politics of recognition and identity. The term "reconciliation" itself calls up hope and refers to some form of psycho-social healing, some form of restitution, and a move towards a more just society. Formal reconciliation

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projects in numerous countries are complemented by multifaceted grassroots reconciliation activities and sensibilities. While the focus of this chapter is mainly on developing *imaginal* pedagogies, an acknowledgement of the extreme demands that a reconciliation agenda places upon the imagination and on any mythopoetic pedagogy provides the background and impetus. The work of fully investigating the complex contours created by a reconciliation imagination and appropriate pedagogies remains to be done.

A reconciliation imagination concerns itself with issues such as: the difficult challenges faced in a double process of acknowledgement and forgiveness, of grief and trauma alongside hope and healing; the complexities of acknowledging different ways of knowing, valuing, and experiencing in an inter- or trans-cultural dialogue; the struggle to re-imagine memory, responsibility, shame, grief, land, identity, and place; how to heal the imagination in the face of tragedy; how to imagine hope and transformation; plus how imagining itself functions in the struggles for such things. I want to indicate the scope of such a project by highlighting just a few examples of the various calls to imagination within the literature of reconciliation.

Even the capacity to imagine the scale of injustice and oppression, in all its myriad details, presents an enormous challenge. For example, Philip Gourevitch was a journalist who repeatedly traveled through a Rwanda that had scarcely emerged from its 1994 genocide and was struggling toward some kind of reconciliation. He cites Marlow, the narrator from Conrad's *Heart of darkness*, who has returned, disturbed and exhausted, from Africa: "It was not my strength that needed nursing … it was my imagination that wanted soothing" (Gourevitch 1998, p. 7). Gourevitch continues: "The word 'genocide' and the images of the nameless and numberless dead left too much to the imagination" (p. 7).

In a study titled "Critical whiteness studies and the antiracist imagination" Roth-Gordon (2003) gestures towards the complex and contentious question of "whiteness" and "blackness" as cultural indicators. An *imaginal* engagement with the psycho-cultural politics of color is urgently required (Hillman 1986; Fanon 1967).

In her work "Imagining responsibility: who are 'we' anyway?" Penny Rossiter addresses the issue of collective identity in the face of collective responsibility. She introduces notions of an "ethico-political imagination," and insists that: "In the transindividual constitution of selfhood the imagination plays a vital part" (Rossiter 2002, pp. 82–84).

Helen Verran turns her attention to the critical issue of re-imagining land ownership in Australia. She insists that questions about claims of "ownership" can only be resolved through a shared imaginary. In her discussion of the encounter between Indigenous Australians and pastoralists over the meanings of land ownership, Verran argues that "by restoring imaginaries to modern theories of knowledge, we rediscover the capacity to re-imagine ourselves and devise ways … [of working] with other communities" (Verran 1998, p. 249; Jacobs 2003). In other words it is the task of mythopoetics to re-mythologize western systems of knowledge. Derrida refers to the "white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology … for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason" (Derrida 1982, p. 213).

A Double Difficulty: Imaginal and Reconciliation Pedagogies

A reconciliation imaginal presents any pedagogy with a doubly difficult task. On the one hand, an education of the imaginal can so easily lose or even destroy the very qualities it is attempting to foster. Contemporary universities, for example, with their commitment to training and to recipe knowledge, to routinization, bureaucratic accountability, and constant managerial surveillance, to the student as customer and an emphasis on employment outcomes no matter what the job, would seem scarcely conducive to the education of the imaginal. Doubts have been cast on the capacity of universities, particularly with their contemporary regimes of assessment and learning outcomes, to function as sites of imaginal pedagogy (e.g. Miller 1999). Similarly, from a reconciliation perspective, the issue is to find pedagogies and contexts that do not replicate or merely serve the very system of oppression that they seek to overcome, whether in their organisation, culture, methods, language, or knowledge. For example, for Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1986), liberation from the legacy of colonialism cannot be achieved through the use of the oppressor's language. Instead, what he terms a "decolonisation of the mind" has to occur. Such a struggle involves a decolonizing, not just of language in general, but of the imagination.

Ngugi cites Cheikh Hamidou Kane, who insists that colonizing power comes from both the efficiency of force and the ability "to heal with the same art." The schools and their western-centric pedagogies, writes Kane, established by the colonizers in an apparent gesture of benevolence, "made the conquest permanent. The cannon forces the body and the school fascinates the soul" (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o 1986, p. 9). Here is a dilemma in all post- or anti-colonial struggles. Should the linguistic status quo be accepted and best use be made of the colonizer's language? Can it be transformed by the colonized? Should it be abandoned, or at least removed from its central position of authority, and instead the native tongue be embraced, with its own unique creative capacity and images? (Williams 1998, pp. 36–44). Such questions apply, too, albeit with different inflections, for many of those from the world of the colonizers. An "internal colonization" of mind, culture, education, language, and imagination has long been established in western countries, around which there is a continual process of struggle, albeit often denied, effaced, or trivialized. Issues of class, gender, sexuality, regionality, ethnicity, race, sub-culture, and so on are reflected in the hegemony of a particular kind of western imaginality. To what extent, therefore, can formal, mainstream western educational institutions implement a radical reconciliation-imaginal pedagogy?

Language is a central question in postcolonial theory and this includes the language with which we talk *of* the imaginal, as well as with which we talk *in* the imaginal. There is no universal imaginal language that stands outside politics and culture. The imaginal, both when spoken *of* and when spoken *in*, is consistently marginalized by dominant discourses, which seek to efface their own imaginality and thereby, using a convoluted, solipsistic form of logic, assert their superiority due to their supposedly high degree of abstraction. In most western countries the poetic richness of working-class, or peasant, language, for example, has long been consigned

to minority-hood or just lost altogether. For cultural minorities, or those subjected to colonial and postcolonial circumstances, the situation is amplified. Indeed, reflecting on women's involvement in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Nthabiseng Motsemme writes about the very specific qualities and focus of women's testimonies. In particular she begins to articulate what could be called an *imaginality of silence*: "women's silences uttered at the TRC should … be viewed as part of 'languages of pain and grief' " (Motsemme 2004, p. 910).

Deleuze writes: "the terms *major* and *minor* do not qualify two different languages, but rather two different treatments of language, two usages or functions of the same language, and link up in a direct manner with the political question of minorities" (Deleuze 1998, p. xlvi). It is possible, suggests Deleuze, citing the examples of Kafka, Jarry, and Heidegger, to invent "a minor *use* of a major language" (Deleuze 1998, p. xlviii), or to "transform and transmute a living language by reactivating a dead language inside it" (Deleuze 1998, p. l). It is therefore not always completely necessary to introduce new words or concepts, but to use the old ones differently.

However, despite such difficulties, or even perhaps because of them, imaginal and reconciliation pedagogies present vital opportunities for each other, in a kind of synergistic collaboration. While one compels action around such issues as social justice and anti-racism, the other insists upon eschewing literalisms and fundamentalisms. While there has been much work on decolonizing pedagogies (e.g. Tejeda et al., 2003) within which imagination is often invoked, rarely is there any development of its depth and complexity. Conversely, the complexity of social analysis is often lacking in discussions of imaginal pedagogies. Together they can provide a platform from which to stereoscopically provide insight, critique, and challenge prevailing educational regimes, whilst simultaneously pointing to alternatives.

A reconciliation perspective gives added inflection to Kearney's insistence that imagination must undertake "a hermeneutic reading of its own genealogy: one which critically reassesses its own traditions, retells its own stories" (1988, p. 390). A reconciliation "imaginary" operates from within the practices and struggles themselves, questioning the very grammar and logic by which the imaginal is understood, used and legitimized.

What Are Poets for in Destitute Times? The Dialectic of Shadow and Hope

Given the extraordinary dullness, if not direct hostility, of much contemporary social science towards mythopoetics, plus a lack of enthusiasm within higher education for a critical mythopoetics, we could well ask whether a perspective and pedagogy of mythopoetics is always compelled to operate around and from the margins. Is this its natural, appropriate, and most effective place? In fact I am pretty convinced that mythopoetics inherently involves a reading from the margins, from the underbelly, against or across the grain.

While I believe the need for a mythopoetic perspective has maintained its importance, the opportunities, time, and energy to sustain a full level of commitment to mythopoetic research, pedagogy, and practice have been difficult for me to find in recent years. Partly I blame the direction that western universities have taken, plus, in a broader context, the active colonization of everyday life by a neo-liberal political economy acting through the triple agencies of rampant corporatization and bureaucratization, a flood of administrivia, and an intrusively proactive micromanagement. While each of these regimes *potentially* provides a rich field for mythopoetic insights, such a practice is difficult even for the most skillful and dedicated imaginal activist. Also, there has been an astonishing rise of various political, religious, therapeutic, and other literalist fundamentalisms. These in turn have received dramatic and pervasive influence through the hegemonic dominance of a promotional culture with all its sophisticated media-based apparatus of advertising, public relations, and marketing. Jack Zipes warned, 25 years ago, of the instrumentalization of fantasy making, where mythopoetics is harnessed as a utilitarian, productive tool, often in order to sustain oppressive situations, rather than used in a deepening, complexifying, and critically reflexive way. The imagination is increasingly being used as a way to improve production and consumption, particularly through the entertainment industry, rather than as a means to evaluate the worth and ethics of actions (Zipes 1979). Today mythopoetics is a major instrument of promotional-consumer culture, one in which extraordinary fantasies are created and projected with unparalleled power, pervasiveness, and effectiveness. Again, this often manipulative and oppressive promotional culture offers both an urgent challenge and an extraordinary richness for imaginal insights and engagement.

> Over 150 years ago Holderlein posed a dilemma:
> Surely, friend, we have come too late. The gods are alive,
> Yes, but yonder, up there, in another world overhead.
> There they are endlessly active and seem not greatly to care
> If we are living or not. (Holderlein 1972, p. 43)

But are the times too late? Are the gods indifferent to our fate? In the face of such circumstances Holderlein asked: "What are poets for in destitute times?" (Heidegger 1975, p. 91; Holderlein 1972, p. 43). All who are involved in imaginal practice, in living an imaginal life, not just educators, are like poets and must face the question of purpose.

I believe we are in a period, scarcely unique and certainly not the direst in history, but bad enough all the same, in which we must *struggle* for mythopoetics, one in which we need to evolve strategies and tactics for reclaiming, or even just sustaining, an imaginal perspective and pedagogy both in our individual lives and in the public arena. In such difficult times I believe we must increasingly turn to informal micro-sites of imaginal activity, especially pedagogical ones, and to glimpses of imaginal insight, invention, and resistance, wherein soul sparks can be gathered (Bishop 2004). These can be in mainstream schools or tertiary institutions, in alternative "institutions" specifically designed to foster an imaginal perspective and practice, or in any of the myriad places and practices of everyday life.

"It is difficult for us today to remember," writes James Hillman, "the long historical fear of the image and of fantasy in our tradition" (1975, p. 11). Edward Casey is more forthright about this anti-imaginal tradition: "When Sartre speaks of imagining as 'degraded knowing' … he is articulating an inbred bias against imagination whose most virulent expression is found in the seventeenth century Cartesian reaction to the Renaissance Exultation of the magical powers of imaging" (Casey 1974, p. 26; also, Sartre 1978, p. 141). An awareness and understanding of this struggle is a crucial part of an imaginal pedagogy. As Mary Watkins insists, "we must first feel how our culture raised us to try to abandon all possible awareness of the imaginal in our lives" (1977, p. vii); Kaarina Kailo (1997) emphasises both the marginalization of appropriate pedagogies for fantasy work, and of teachers' struggles to realise these. Eric Fromm (1978) wrote of the political consequences of "the forgotten language" of dream, myth, and symbol. While the "imagination" is tacitly approved in certain settings, such as childhood, art, advertising, and entertainment, it is too often trivialized or simply reduced to creativity. By ignoring or devaluing the imaginal, by neglecting the education of an imaginal literacy, we leave ourselves open to manipulation. We also lack both the ways to engage in utopian imaginings and ways to evaluate their soulful viability.

Perhaps all times are destitute for poets? A constant dialectic of shadow and hope would seem integral to mythopoetics. From Buddhism to archetypal psychology, there is a stress on the importance of confronting and working through what could be called "shadow," the "underworld," the difficulties and pain inherent in everyday physical and psychological life (e.g. Zweig and Abrams 1991). Buddhist pedagogy, for example, begins with, and never relinquishes, an intense focus on suffering, impermanence, and death, as well invoking images of hope. A pedagogy of engaged Buddhism begins with a compassionate descent into the suffering caused by social injustice.

Archetypal psychology similarly stresses an imaginal "descent" into the "underworld," a confrontation with "the shadow," while simultaneously positing healing possibilities.

Freud placed fantasy image "below." To enter such images therefore became recognized as a descent. Images certainly do not necessarily raise consciousness. Images can initiate us into the reality of an intermediary world, where we learn to see ourselves as images moving among other images. When grounding in the imaginal, in the substantiality, fullness, and depth of the image is lost, then appeals generally turn to abstractions, to literal readings of "morality," "reality," and "truth." For Hillman, depth is "not literally hidden, deep down, inside. Rather the fantasy of depth encourages us to … read each event for 'something deeper', to 'insearch' … rather than to research, for yet further significance below what seems merely evident and natural" (Hillman 1985, p. 29).

In the emancipatory praxis informed by postcolonial and critical theory, the shadow side, or suffering and oppression, form an insistent matrix of daily life against which and from which the struggle occurs. There is a dialectic between, on the one hand grief-outrage and a kind of mourning-melancholy, and, on the other, a struggle for hope. Any imaginal pedagogy, and certainly one struggling within a

reconciliation frame, must avoid short-circuiting the process of descent by premature optimism and avoiding disturbing truths. As Gourevitch was told by a survivor of the Rwandan genocide: "People come to Rwanda and talk of reconciliation … It's offensive. Imagine talking to Jews of reconciliation in 1946. Maybe in a long time" (Gourevitch 1998, p. 240). He muses: "There could be no complete closing of the wound for the generation that suffered it" (1998, p. 316). Along with hope, a reconciliation-imaginal must by necessity engage with disturbing emotions, memories, responsibilities, and a lack of closure.

Gao Xingjian, in his ficto-autobiographical reflection on surviving the devastation of the Cultural Revolution in China, gives a haunting image of a desperate hope:

> he was groping in the dark; seeking a way out was like searching for light, but he relied solely on that small point of dim light in his heart, and it was this feeling that was indestructible. Pressing his palms together to protect that point of dim light in his heart, he slowly moved through thick darkness, quagmire, not knowing where the path lay, yet carefully protecting that point of dim light … [T]hat point of awareness of existence, that point of beauty of life, that gentle light, that spot of pulsating in the heart gradually began to radiate outward. (Gao 2004, pp. 530–531)

Memory and the Imaginal

Memory is absolutely crucial both for reconciliation and for mythopoetics. But what is memory, or what fantasy of memory is currently dominant? What is mythopoetic or imaginal remembrance (Dunne 1988)?

Memory was traditionally imagined in two radically different ways in western culture (Yates 1978). On the one hand memory was viewed as a collection of personal experiences. Such an idea is congruent with the modern understanding of memory. The issue from such a perspective is to devise ways to reclaim true "memories," to establish their veracity, to eliminate false ones, to correct distortion, and to eliminate a certain kind of forgetting caused by repression. On the other hand there was a perspective that considered memory as having more to do with an imaginative landscape and drama, than with literal time past. Hillman writes:

> Memoria was described as a great hall, a storehouse, a theatre packed with images. And the only difference between remembering and imagining was that memory images were those to which a sense of time had been added, that curious conviction that they once had happened … Memory infuses images with memorability, making images more "real" to us by adding to them the sense of time past, giving them historical reality. (1983, p. 41)

The process of remembering was then akin to a journey through an interior landscape in order that these archetypal images could be reclaimed. By using such methods of recall many believed that one could be attuned to the heavens and that, perhaps, one could even "draw down" some of the divine powers and attributes (Yates 1978). Such beliefs are echoed in imaginal ideas from Ibn 'Arabi and Longchenpa to modern therapies that utilize structured visualization (Watkins 1977), as well as across most traditional and modern systems of religion.

The two approaches to memory are not mutually exclusive, but have significance and rigor from within different paradigms. For one approach a literal factuality provides meaning, while for the other meaningfulness comes from an almost cosmological resonance. Under the impact of the rational sciences in the eighteenth century, the poetic and hermetic notions of memory began to be discredited. However, the poetic tradition of memory did not simply disappear, but flowed into new channels. "Memory as a key to magic was displaced by memory as a key to soul searching" (Hutton 1987, p. 380). This new art of memory became "a retrospective search for the connection between our present conceptions and the lost poetic images out of which they were born" (Hutton 1987, p. 378). Or, as Bachelard puts it: "The soul and the mind do not have the same memories" (1971, pp. 14, 105). He insists that if we want to participate in this more poetic, imaginal experience then "it is necessary to rid oneself of the historian's memory" (Bachelard 1971, p. 119).

This is a highly contentious terrain from a reconciliation perspective, struggling as it is with denials of past events and injustices, with the erasure and trivializing of personal memories. Time and again the process of reconciliation absolutely depends on personal testimonies, on witness accounts, on the processes of historical evaluation, of memory as fact in the legal struggles for compensation and restoration. It could seem that the claims for a science of memory are unopposed when it comes to such things and that it alone has political efficacy. Ian Hacking, for example, discusses memory in conjunction with issues around the western knowledge of soul and links it to a "memoro-politics" (Hacking 1995, p. 214; Hirsch 1995; Norval 1998; Simon et al., 2000).

But, from an imaginal standpoint, memory is neither simple fact (historical, legal, etc.) nor just fiction (illusion, make-believe). This is echoed by Shane Graham, commenting on the literature produced in the aftermath of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. He writes of a "tension between factual truth and psychological or personal truth" (Graham 2003, p. 14). As authors such as Sebald (2002), Gao (2003, 2004), and Ngugi (1986) have shown, the struggle for memory in the context of personal and political emancipation and reconciliation is elusive and polyvalent. Claims to truth and veracity, so essential in such contexts, are not diminished by an awareness of, and commitment to, the slippery, shadowy, contradictory realities of imagination.

"Psychotherapy first set out to heal memory," writes Hillman. "Freud cured memory of its notion of itself as history—Mnemosyne's identification with one particular daughter, Clio" (Hillman 1983, p. 42). For Freud, the past was a place: the unconscious. The past is an imaginal place, "a foreign country." Historicizing is a form of image work, a genre of fantasy making. However, treating history and personal memory as a *metaphorical* rather than *literal* reality, especially in situations where there has been gross suffering, injustice, and oppression, is a profound test of psychological faith, of the acceptance of imaginal reality, the imagination as a reality. Memory as an imaginal place, a theater, an entire cosmos, is not apolitical (Yates 1978). Studies such as Perlman's *Imaginal memory and the place of Hiroshima* (1988) complement a wealth of witness or testimony literature and

ficto-autobiographical writing that sustain an imaginal perspective without in any way whatsoever compromising the awful actuality of the events (Engdahl 2002).

The ancient Greeks sometimes envisaged Mnemosyne as a deep well into which were washed the last memory residues that had stubbornly adhered to the corpse, but which were finally removed as the dead made their last journey through the waters of Lethe. Such a belief was echoed in the ritual washing of the corpse and the careful disposal of the resulting memory- or image-laden water. The well of Mnemosyne was therefore a vast storage place of residual memorial images into which the poetic mind could dip for inspiration in order to re-tell humanity's stories (Illich 1985). "Memory heals into imagination," writes Hillman (1983, p. 42).

All theory can be seen as an art of memory, albeit with a denial of its inherent metaphoricity and theatricality. As Derrida has put it, "Abstract notions always hide a sensory figure" (1982, p. 210). He argues that "white mythology," commonly called "reason," has "erased within itself the fabulous scene that has produced it" (Derrida 1982, p. 213).

In the *ars memoria*, striking and sometimes bizarre or disturbing images were used to reach, evoke, and move the deepest aspects of imagination. They were conceived as *imagines agentes* and used to actively prepare the imagination for the reception of various imaginal realities, indeed even to invite such realities (Yates 1978, pp. 25–26). In certain practices of Tibetan Buddhism there is a similar use of bizarre, disturbing, or seductive images, located within complex systems akin to *ars memoria* (Bishop 1993). In almost a parallel with Renaissance magus figures, the goal of visualizing such systematized images is to mobilize dormant but inherent qualities of mind, and latent powers, to provide glimpses of higher, more profound imaginal realms, and perhaps even to actualize them. Such is the expectation, too, of Bloch's utopian imagination, which is not just concerned with the capacity to create future ideals as abstract and distant goals, but to evoke a capacity for creative struggle in the present. Through extreme images of fear, loss, nostalgia, grief, and guilt, we are forced to descend. The modern curse is the loss of a doorway into the imaginal realm, plus a forgetting that such a doorway and such a realm even exist.

The challenge is to find ways in which to educate for a critical, political imaginal memory.

Drinking Some Darkness

As many poets have emphasized, an imaginal engagement with, and descent into, the vale of suffering presents an opportunity, however unwelcome, however much dread and resistance there is for such a journey. Rilke, for example, insists:

> Only one who has lifte.d the lyre among shadows too,
> May divining render the infinite praise. (1970, p. 33)

For Garcia Lorca the *duende* is the essence of authentic poetics. "The duende," he insists, "does not come at all unless he sees that death is possible." The duende

"loves the rim of the wound" (Lorca 1980, pp. 29–30). The Swedish poet Tomas Transtromer puts it most eloquently:

> Friends you drunk some darkness and became visible. (Bly 1975, p. 263)

Drinking some darkness describes imagination's role in returning "difficult knowledge" to education, in a pedagogical engagement with "inconsolability" (Britzman 1998). In the late twentieth-century context of a struggle toward reconciliation between Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, there was a demand that the dark and disturbing side of colonization must be fully acknowledged. This call was quickly dismissed by the then Prime Minister, John Howard, as a "black armband" view of history. Yet such a view of the past as, in part, a chronicle of perhaps atrocious actions committed not by others but by those with whom we identify, whether individually or as a nation, is a vital part of the engagement between reconciliation and mythopoetics. Through drinking some darkness not only can we begin to see, but "we" also become visible to others and, critically, to ourselves.

Imagining the Imaginal

There are many, often disparate, descriptions, definitions, categorizations, and evaluations of the imagination and imaginative practice. Exposure to this multiplicity of voices, confusion of contradictory perspectives, is a crucial part of an imaginal pedagogy. It forces the acceptance of contradiction, of the yes, no, and neither and both, response. It moves outside the hegemony that privileges either philosophic abstraction or empirical proof as the arbiters of logic and disagreement. Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia describes the struggle against any "'unitary', 'correct' … and 'one language' … of truth" (Luo 2005, p. 290). A struggle to enunciate an imaginal heteroglossia seems to drive the ficto-autobiographical "reconciliation" works of authors such as Gao Xingjian (2004), Shao-Pin Luo (2005), W. G. Sebald (2002), and Schlesinger (2004).

Not all theorists of the imaginal encompass social, environmental, and personal oppression, neither do all encompass the existential, trans-individual, or sacred. Also, while some give an introspective slant to their ideas on imagination, others move in a more extraverted direction. However, I believe that all these aspects are essential to an imaginal pedagogy.

Jung, for example, described active imagining as simply "a method of introspection for observing the stream of interior images" (Jung, cited in Casey 1974, p. 20). Steady observation allows the understanding of how "all the time we are dependent upon things that literally fall into our consciousness" (Jung, quoted in Watkins 1977, p. 105).

On the other hand, Nicholsen contrasts "creative imagination" with Adorno's "exact imagination," describing it as an attention to material details, a precision of observation (Nicholsen 1997, pp. 4–5). Others move between both perspectives. For example, Bachelard's emphasis on reverie links an interior focus with a "material

imagination," one that restores imagination to neglected things (Bachelard 1960, 1983). Hillman (1982), too, lays emphasis on soul in the world, an attention to imaginality of things, on an anima mundi perspective. This turn of the imaginal to the world and away from a single-minded focus on the intra-psychic is crucial for its relevance to reconciliation and other social justice projects.

Poetics is fundamental to the capacity to "inhabit the world" (Bachelard 1969). This echoes Heidegger's notion of "dwelling" and the poet Neruda's (1972) *residencia*. For Heidegger the poetic is not "merely an ornament and bonus added to dwelling" (1975, p. 215). Not only do humans dwell poetically, it is poetic creation that lets us dwell (Heidegger 1975, p. 214). For Ficino (1980), an imaginal life brings an everyday state of well-being. A skillful engagement with the imagination brings healing and soul making both to the individual and to the world. Through an imagination of the heart one can become alive to the beauty of the world.

While Guenther, commenting on Longchenpa's work, considers the capacity for creative imagination to lie merely at the beginning of an emancipatory path, nevertheless, "the perception or vision of Being … as the ultimate meaning of life," is of fundamental importance.

> To actualize this experience and make it live on in the individual's concrete existence, to establish meaningful being in the now, not the tomorrow, or the never—this is the task of creative imagination. It is the capacity of conceiving images, grasping their implications, controlling their expression into articulate presentations. (Longchenpa 1976, p. 185)

For Longchenpa the creative imagination (*sgom-pa*) is crucial to the conception-practice of "awakening," of spiritual liberation.

Others insist that imagination is not a choice, not necessarily even a creative process, not an addition to normal thought processes. Imagination is *always* present and at work. Imagination is a reality. It is the inevitable fantasy that is inherent in any idea or action, perception, or identity. There is a poetic basis to mind: "mind is in the imagination rather than imagination in the mind," argues Hillman (1985, p. 7). For Corbin a creative imagination of the heart is always a trans-individual phenomenon. As Hillman puts it: "imagination is not merely a human faculty but is an activity of soul to which the human imagination bears witness. It is not we who imagine but we who are imagined" (1985, pp. 7–8).

Mythopoetics provides a crucial resource for the religious-sacred dimension that is so absolutely fundamental to the work and pedagogy of reconciliation, albeit a dimension that is so often overlooked. The sense of sacred, of ultimate meaningfulness, pervades imaginal life. A deep sense of imaginal reality, with an associated pedagogy, offers a critical and "sacred" perspective for the religious confrontations that pervade so many of today's conflicts.

Guenther (Longchenpa 1976, p. 150), commenting on Longchenpa's ideas, writes: "The experience of what is termed 'deity' (*lha*) is an imaginative apprehension of the inner potential for limpid clearness and consummate perspicacity." Corbin, drawing on Ibn 'Arabi's work, writes of the "theophanic imagination," whereby the "Active Imagination is essentially the organ of theophanies" (Corbin 1969, p. 190). As with

Tibetan visualizations, the adept's intense power of the heart (*himma*) creates a divine vision as an act of imagination. But this human creation is "epiphanic" in that it is a response to a transcendent "divine" reality (Corbin 1969, pp. 222–224). *Therapeutes*, writes Hillman (1975, p. 192), originally meant "one who serves the Gods." The aim was to "expand the scope of the psyche so that it can reflect the immense mythical universe of the polytheistic imagination" (Hillman 1975, p. 193). Bachelard puts it into other words: "As I see them, archetypes are reserves of enthusiasm which help us believe in the world, to love the world, to create our world" (1971, pp. 97–98).

Destitute times need collaborations; communities of imaginal players, workers, practitioners, theorists. Conversations are required between diverse perspectives on the imaginal that sustain difference, debate, and disagreement. The aim is not to establish a new totalizing discourse. Where is the ground for a meeting between Adorno's "exact imagination," Jung's introspective psychological imagination, Corbin's "theophanic imagination," Bachelard's "material imagination" and the imagination of "reverie," Bloch's "utopian imagination," Longchenpa's "creative imagination"? All these schema are themselves imaginal fantasies, are themselves *ars memoria*.

We can return these theories of the imaginal to an imaginal take on theory. Theory: *theorein* (Gr), to look at; *theoria* (Gr), a looking, a seeing, a speculation. Theory is also related to *thauma* (Gr), a thing compelling the gaze, a wonder, and hence a theater. To theorize is to find oneself in a particular place or topos. It moves us back into the intermediary realm of *ars memoria* with its systems such as the sixteenth-century memory theater of Giulio Camillo (Yates 1978). Casey (1974) proposed the term "archetypal topographies" to describe these fields or constellations of archetypal imagery or what Vico (1975) called *universali fantastici*. These archetypal topographies suggest a way, like *ars memoria*, of inter-imaginal dialogue. Each theory of the imagination is itself a script written by a character performing a role in an imaginal theater.

Imaginal Pedagogies: A Heteroglossian Project

Vico (1975) stressed the fundamental importance of poetic thinking, which he called *ricorsi*. This is both an attitude and a method for seeing the history of fantasies and the fantasies of history (Hillman 1978). As a way of uncovering imaginal patterns and poetic images, this kind of re-turning of images and fantasies to some more fundamental ground of symbolization, of mythic resonance, is common to many theorist-philosophers of the imaginal. Corbin, for example, discusses Ibn 'Arabi's notion of *ta'wil*, as "symbolic understanding, the transmutation of everything visible into symbols" (1969, p. 13). The *ta'wil* leads fantasies back to their archetypal ground.

A different way of education was a crucial feature of philosophers such as Ficino who called his pedagogy a "counter-education" (Hillman 1978, p. 155). By

this he meant the work against the apparent and taken for granted world. Alchemists called it an *opus contra naturam*, a work against or contrary to "nature." By this means we can begin to detach ourselves from, and gain insight into, the literalistic fantasies, the belief in the naturalness of our views, and start "to see with the eyes of soul, the soul of things" (Hillman 1975, p. 201). Guenther writes of the role of imagination in freeing "our vision from the drab blur of triteness and 'familiarity', and to enable us to see our 'familiar' world anew, aglow, afresh, and alive" (Longchenpa 1976, p. 167). For others the imaginal "is the experience, and the expression, of a resistance to the codifying characteristic of all systems of signification and gives rise to something else" (Dillon 2000, p. 18). This seems akin to Giroux's suggestions about "border pedagogy as a counter-text" and "counter memory" (1997, pp. 147, 150).

There are numerous established ways of educating imaginal experience and skills through structured attention to dreams, meditation, vision, visualization, day dreams, reverie, active imagining, and creative imagination. Each of these has their own traditions, disciplines, body of knowledge, and guides to practice. To these "psychological" and introspective approaches could be added a host of others drawn from, say, the performing and visual arts, story-telling, and so on. However, there is much debate about the relative efficacy of, and problems associated with, the use of formal, structured "disciplines" and, by contrast, more informal and less structured approaches. Structured methods and the use of such things as pre-designed images can restrict, damage, co-opt, or supplant spontaneity and individual symbol formation (Watkins 1977).

Hillman suggests that imaginal pedagogy

> may be going on best where it is noticed least as in "negative learning", as an underground interior reaction of "dissonant learning", in which the sourness of the student eats through the established positive statements, corroding their face value, yielding an acerbic learning that is *against* what is given, a countereducation. Psychologizing sees through what is taught: it is a learning beyond any teaching. (1975, pp. 132–133)

Imaginal pedagogies are always forms of counter-education, "moving all standpoints off balance toward their borders, their extremes. At the borders Hermes rules … Here errors are as fruitful as truths" (Hillman 1975, p. 163). Hillman is here proposing a border-pedagogy with Hermes as its tricksterish imaginal pedagogue. "Seeing-through, insighting, is an activity that opens; anything becomes an opportunity for soul-making" (1975, p. 163).

A re-awakening of the experience of the imaginal—its range, depth, possibilities—is common to all imaginal pedagogies.

- How to think and/or operate imaginally rather than about and/or with the imaginal?
- How to engage with images?
- How to locate ourselves as images, mythopoetically, within the work?
- Teaching strategies could include:
  - Bringing unusual juxtapositions into intimate alignments
  - Deconstructing and/or deliteralizing what is taken to be most densely literal
  - Leaving pedagogical gaps, creating spaces of doubt

- Creating and mobilizing alternative possibilities
- Encouraging imaginative play
- Embracing and deepening paradox and contradiction
- Re-mythologizing through returning to stories
- Re-metaphorizing language and words
- Encouraging a metaphorical listening to oneself and others, plus to places and things
- Creating images of hope
- Developing stories about the marginalization of fantasy-pedagogy and the struggle for excluded imaginal voices and practices

Mythopoetics is not confined to literary, verbal, or visual forms. For example, music offers important insights into the nature of the imaginal and to its pedagogies, as well as suggesting a middle path between formal-structured practice and informal-spontaneous-opportunist approaches. Bloch insisted that "music is a materialisation of the form that imagination gives hope" (Brown 2003, p. 6). Certainly, music has an important imaginal place in reconciliation struggles, as experiences in Australia and South Africa have shown. It has been suggested that the mode of operation of imaginal activity is "sonorous, acoustic, phonetic … that words are fantasies in sound" (Kugler 1978, p. 139). Thomas Moore (1978) in a paper on "Musical therapy" discussed the ways Ficino attempted to educate the imagination, to keep it vitalized, and open to a fullness and richness of experiences. He used music, colors, clothing, walks in selected environments, foods, herbs and spices, iconography, and so on. Formal exercises such as these were designed to assist a tuning into, a receptivity toward, and, as per the Renaissance magus figures, an inviting of specific gods, or archetypal presences and constellations. They can assist practitioners and students to gradually build confidence in their own stream of consciousness.

These threads are brought together by Stephanie Scherf (2001) in her suggestions for what she terms "rap pedagogy." Drawing on ideas from Giroux's idea of border pedagogy she stresses the possibilities for counter-hegemonic voices from the margins, referring to hip hop as a form of imaginal engagement in the classroom.

Craig Dworkin (2004), on the other hand, draws on John Cage as he attempts to envisage a pedagogy appropriate to the material—one that sustains its radical, imaginal life. He cites Cage: "I have nothing to say, and I'm saying it, and that is poetry" (Dworkin 2004, p. 610).

The multiplicity, the heteroglossia, of pedagogies is a crucial part of pedagogy. As with the language of the imaginal, there is no single "correct" pedagogy. But how can an "angelic pedagogy" as expounded by Henry Corbin (1980, p. 75), drawing on Iranian Sufism, enter a dialogue with "rap pedagogy," or "border pedagogy," or a Bachelard-inspired pedagogy of gentle reverie, or, following Bloch, a pedagogy of the utopian imagination? These imaginal pedagogies must themselves be seen as *ars memoria*, as particular theaters of imaginal play, or at least as scripts for imaginal characters.

Imaginal Pedagogies in Their Contexts: A Few Examples

Pedagogy always occurs within a context, and these contexts provide both limitations and possibilities for an imaginal or mythopoetic "education." Each context also both provides material for imaginal reflection plus it poses a challenge to discover relevant and effective practices. I want to illustrate a range of possibilities by outlining some imaginal-oriented pedagogical contexts with which I have had some experience.

There are extremely limited opportunities for a university-based curriculum that focuses *specifically* on imaginal or mythopoetic "studies," or on "reconciliation studies." A devoted focus on these two fields seems only to be possible within institutions specifically designed for that purpose. These are generally outside of mainstream universities, or loosely attached to them (e.g. the Pacifica Graduate Institute: pacifica.edu/; the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation: sunsite.wits.ac.za/trcresearch/aboutcsv.htm).

The only widely applicable approach seems to be one of integrating fragments of an imaginal or reconciliation perspective into other disciplines, always with the risk that their uniqueness becomes lost or, at best, formally integrated as a minor perspective. For example, while there are numerous Jungian studies programs at universities around the world, an imaginal or mythopoetic perspective and pedagogy would usually be just one perspective being taught and this within a "Jungian" paradigm (also, for geography, see Bishop 1992).

Some 25 years ago I attempted to design and teach an imaginal sociology and sociology of education at tertiary level (Bishop 1991).[2] I mention it as an example of an attempt to construct a sustained imaginal or mythopoetic curriculum *within* an established "university" discipline. It addressed the twin concerns of social justice and reflexive self-transformation. Generally well-received by students, it was also at variance to their other courses, so its credibility and relevance was always strained. Its wilder, more mythopoetic aspects gradually became more systematic, normalized, and rationalized as more constraints began to be exercised at universities. However, many of the experiences I gained from this "program" now flow into more conventional curriculum and teaching, albeit in small and fragmented opportunities.

[2] One core subject was an introduction to sociology, "Consciousness and Society", which engaged with sex, madness, and, in particular, death, as well as with issues around consciousness, social reality, meaning, and identity. Another, "Myth, Dream, and Language," focused on the theory and practice of mythopoetics as a sociological perspective, not just a sociology of mythopoetics. Music, visual thinking, sense exercises, story-telling, and some fieldwork that particularly drew on pedagogies of "place" were used, alongside theoretical studies. A "Sociology of Knowledge and Education" subject for final year education students, while grounded in critical theory, primarily focused on intercultural "ways of knowing." In all of the courses, mythopoetics was treated as a legitimate form of knowledge and inquiry, as was a critical reflexivity both toward the tertiary context and to sociology/sociology of education as disciplines. With a small grant and student volunteers from the B.Ed. subject, I also undertook research into the use of structured imaginal practices (e.g. dream recording, guided visualization) in the teaching of a reflexive sociology/sociology of education (Bishop 1981).

I now have major reservations about the possibilities of teaching mythopoetics in any sustained way within contemporary universities. While such an enterprise was never easy, I feel that things have become more difficult. I am not alone in such an evaluation. The imaginal is often elusive, slippery, and resistive. In contemporary tertiary culture it is difficult to build into a contemporary formal curriculum the necessary confusion, doubt, spontaneity, "educated gaps," and sense of unknowingness that I believe are vital. However, I am not only unwilling to abandon such places, but believe opportunities and possibilities exist. Appropriate means need to be identified and micro-sites sought—moments and opportunities where an imaginal turn can be made. In addition to teaching and learning, this can also occur in writing and research, administrative responsibilities, and in general collegial culture. Any university-based mythopoetic pedagogy that does not simultaneously insight, critique, re-mythologize, and struggle against the tertiary context would seem doomed to become just another product to be purchased by student customers. But I am not unduly downhearted by this not unexpected state of affairs. Nor do I believe it tells the whole story. There are many reasons to feel optimistic (Bishop 2004). A widespread reconciliation sensibility is just one of these. Also, as I have discussed above, there is a rich resource in the theory and practice of imaginal pedagogy on which to draw.

Given the difficulties of developing and practising viable imaginal pedagogies within universities, it is no surprise to find people setting up small independent institutions or "groups" specifically for such purposes. The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, for example, dates back to the early 1980s, when I attended it for several months. It was the seminal foundation "center" for the development of imaginal studies and archetypal psychology. For a long time it was closely aligned with Spring Publications and is a leader in the translation and publication of Bachelard's work. It runs classes and symposia, and takes an active interventionist role in civic/public issues, particularly in Dallas (www.dallasinstitute.org/).

The London Convivium of Archetypal Studies, with which I was involved since its inception, existed from the late 1980s through to the late 1990s as a non-profit organisation. It ran international conferences, classes, and workshops, and produced the annual journal *Sphinx* (Cobb 1992). It stressed a mythopoetics that closely aligned therapeutics to art: visual, music, writing. A new group, the Imaginal Institute, has very recently been set up in the United States (www.imaginalinstitute.com). Unlike universities, none of these groups award formal qualifications.

Finally, as example of a much more informal "alternative" group, I want to mention Formings, which myself and others were instrumental in setting up in the late 1970s in Adelaide. It was built around two main streams of activity: Buddhist, particularly Tibetan, and archetypal psychology, plus a looser range of other imaginal-related practices. The "program" was free of charge. While many people were involved in all activities, building a kind of "synthesis" between them, others were selective about the direction of their commitment. Some were exclusively interested in the archetypal studies and others the Buddhist. Unlike most groups there was very little emphasis put into sustaining its longevity. Its mode was deliberately

informal and spontaneous. From my perspective it was about as close as one could get to a non-group group. About 30 people formed a regular core, with activities held several times a week. By the early 1980s, more specialist, focused groups were starting to be established, such as Jung societies and centers around specific strands of Buddhism. There was also a rise of professionalized "alternative" therapeutics. As a generalized, loosely organized, multi-focused group, Formings' moment passed and it fragmented, with many participants heading off to become leaders in a range of imaginal-related activities. I believe it was a great success in its time and, while it illustrates the highly contingent nature of imaginal pedagogies, it does suggest another possible, more "anarchic," approach.

While dedicated to imaginal activities and to imaginal pedagogies, there is no guarantee that even these "alternative" groups and institutions will be as successful as they hope. All pedagogical organizations have a shadow side, have both possibilities and limitations. The context itself, its organization, its culture, sense of tradition, methods, and knowledges, must be the focus of a critical imaginal reflexivity, applying its own perspectives to itself, de-literalizing and re-mythologizing itself.[3] The imaginal is at work precisely where our beliefs and convictions are most dense and concrete. By deliteralizing we can find within them some fundamental root metaphors of western fantasy making.

As Hillman has pointed out,

> all teaching is relevant to the soul as long as its literalism is psychologised. Every statement in every branch of learning in every university department is a statement made by the psyche through men and women and is a psychological statement. Psychology … is going on everywhere. (1975, pp. 132–133)

But there is no doubt that the practice of mythopoetics, or what Hillman here terms psychologizing, can be extremely difficult, if not almost impossible, in unconducive circumstances.

Mary Watkins, who has been dedicated to a struggle for soul and social justice for many years, writes:

> A depth psychologist committed to the liberation of being might be found in the consulting room, the classroom, the teen theatre group, the prison or hospital, in an outdoor nature classroom, or in the office of a policy maker. In each of these sites the impulse toward the liberation of being can be nourished … if only we can hear and see the many levels of liberation that are needed and clarify the manner of their interpretation. (1999, p. 233)

She suggests that the "basic stance of depth psychology … [is] to call forth marginalized being, to respect the multiple voices which comprise truth, and to invite dialogue" (1999, p. 233). Bakhtin's preferred sites have more of a sense of carnival about them, but are no less radical:

> on the stages of local fairs and at buffoon spectacles, the heteroglossia of the clown sounded forth, ridiculing all "languages" and dialects, there developed the literature of …

[3] See, for example, the debate over the identity and affiliation of archetypal psychology (Bishop 1987; Cobb 1992; Samuels 1988). See also my own reflections on western Buddhism (Bishop 1993).

> street songs, folksayings, anecdotes, where there was no language-centre at all, where there was to be found a lively play with the "languages" of poets, scholars, monks, knights and others, where all "languages" were masks and where no language could claim to be an authentic, incontestable face. (cited in Luo 2005, p. 290)

To conclude on a more humbling note, we are also reminded by Yannis Ritsos, whose poetry was born from years of bitter struggle for social justice in post-World War II Greece, that there are limits to the effectiveness of poetics, the imaginal, to change the world. Confronted by the lament of a poor and desperate farmer, he writes:

> The dusk
> in full red was dying. And poetry
> was hiding mute, behind the trees,
> staring at her illuminated and useless hands. (Ritsos 1977, p. 84)

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Chapter 4
Myth in the Practice of Reason: The Production of Education and Productive Confusion

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Abstract The pedagogies of pure reason have great power to order, direct, and accelerate linear modes of learning. Education has been transformed by this power into a science of reliable formulae, engineered curricula and measurable indicators: a science for maximizing the production and consumption of knowledge. In the process, scientific pedagogies have sought to strip myth from the world, revealing a universe in which ever less is left to the imagination. Yet, I argue, this project is itself profoundly mythic. Through an interest in nonlinear, unpredictable, and wild possibilities in learning, and drawing upon my experience as a teacher in the productivist university, I advocate not that myth be added back onto the modern curriculum, but that teachers be seen as already and always bearers of myth. When teachers step out from behind the façade of consistency, certainty, and coherence that has taken on almost sacred importance in modern pedagogies, even for a moment, they may initiate productive forms of confusion that can bring into empathetic inquiry the myth at the core of modern reason. This is a form of transformative inquiry capable of reconstituting teaching as a craft for facilitating human encounters with a knowing reality, an eloquent reality, a good reality.

Preamble from the Factory Floor

> If a poet is anybody, he is somebody to whom things made matter very little—somebody who is obsessed by Making. (Cummings 1953, p. 64)

Although not a poet, I have come to the realization that I too may be obsessed by the making of understanding. The signs have perhaps long been evident in a distrust of ready-made knowledge and a lack of interest in assembling kits of pre-determined understanding. Such obsession with the practice of understanding rather than with the fact of knowing, I now suspect, has left me constitutionally unsuited to faith in the promise that modern science can explain everything, from space to emotion, and modern technology make everything, from new worlds to happiness.

I remain a skeptic not for want of sporadic bouts of trying (including some years of retreat into the order of the laboratory). To mistrust such promises is to fit

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awkwardly into a world made constantly new, if poorly renewed. It is to doubt the substance of this world, yet meet with friction from it in the most ordinary of tasks. It is to grow tired in the midst of tirelessness; to go slower as things speed up. It is to be left behind. And it is to wonder if, despite its difficulties, this is such a bad thing.

I am, however, given to faith in the omnipresence of paradox and thus inclined to believe that the more impressive the house of worship, the greater the prospect of uncovering heretics. I find this belief of particular comfort just now in Australia where the re-making of universities into factories for the production of knowledge is being undertaken by their managers with unyielding, wild-eyed fervor.

Like many who teach in the factories where teaching is taught I have had the mixed, but I think basically good, fortune of never having been taught to teach in any formal way: a quirk of Australian academic life in the process of being corrected. Being of no fixed discipline and having passion for the task has helped me avoid scrutiny. More important to my institutional survival, though, has been harboring by heretics with tenure and the forgiving hunger of students who want to learn the world so as to change it. I like to think that, with the help of students and mentors and bittersweet memories of my own schooling, I have cut a path toward the craft of teaching as I have gone along over the last dozen years. To the extent I have progressed, I have done so without having paid heed to the many maps and guide books on offer, learning much when I have been lost and, so far, collecting only minor scars. This journey is not becoming any easier. If anything, it is becoming more difficult. Despite this, I appreciate my adventures as a teacher more and not less as the semesters pass by. As rampant growth of knowledge threatens to inhibit growth of understanding—and as academic careerism grows more desperate and unsatisfying—the activist potential teaching holds grows also increasingly precious.

I stake a claim to write on pedagogy, then, with wholehearted tentativeness born of the factory floor. I do so indebted to others, and especially to those several years of environmental ethics students who entered generously into the spirit of a lecture in celebration of "the importance of being confused," and to a senior colleague who merely laughed when, one year, I began unexpectedly to undress before them. Finally, I do so with sturdy props borrowed from one as wise as E. E. Cummings, who gave this account of how he, an avowed non-lecturer, took to a brief experiment in lecturing in 1952.

> Lecturing is presumably a form of teaching; and presumably a teacher is somebody who knows. I never did, and still don't, know. What has always fascinated me is not teaching but learning; and I assure you that if the acceptance of a Charles Eliot Norton professorship hadn't rapidly entangled itself with the expectation of learning a great deal, I should now be somewhere else. (Cummings 1953, p. 3)

Learning, the movement into understanding, is fascinating. I have watched it happen to others. I have been plunged most thoroughly into its mystery by my children, discovering it to be a movement that extends far beyond words. I have come to respect, if not really to understand, the ways in which learning and teaching so often transform each into the other.

Introduction: The Trick of Learning

> the trick of finding what you didn't lose
> (existing's tricky: but to live's a gift)
> the teachable imposture of always
> arriving at the place you never left
> (and I refer to thinking) rests upon
> a dismal misconception; namely that
> some neither ape nor angel called a man
> is measured by his quote eye cue unquote. (Cummings 1968, p. 807)

Commonly, learning arises as an experience of gradual, broadly predictable, and linear advance. This is a gathering accumulation of knowledge linked to a gathering momentum of understanding. It is a movement that draws the learner into a more complex, explicit, and responsive field of directed thought, action, and feeling. On this form of steady, linear movement, today's dominant pedagogies are perceptive. Although they retain a romantic narrative about the gift of revelatory genius—the Einstein factor—by which learning advances in breathtaking bounds, the pedagogies of pure reason have aspired to turn learning into a science of reliable formulae, engineered curricula, measurable indicators, and astonishing productivity.

Linear modes of learning are, and no doubt have always been, of crucial importance to individuals and to societies. The power of modern pedagogies to order, direct, and accelerate such learning is unprecedented. It is the source of much individual and social good. The science of education has enabled the creation of stockpiles of knowledge vaster than anything that could have been imagined by those who dreamed of shining the light of reason on a dark world in the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, this is far from being the whole story about teaching. Sadly, a great deal of damage has been done by the present influence of the belief that it is. It is this belief that I think of as I read Cummings's warning about "the teachable imposture" of modern rationality.

It seems to me that an interest in nonlinear, unpredictable, and wild possibilities in learning may help to resist some of the present influence of "dismal misconceptions" about the practice of teaching, although such possibilities are endangered in university environments I inhabit. In what follows, I attend specifically to the way such possibilities may be sustained in the practice of teaching through the play of mythic energy. Of necessity, then, I shall be concerned with aspects of teaching and personal and social transformation that scientific logics of learning explain only poorly, or not at all, and with one particular pedagogy that lies beyond its reach. To this pedagogy I give the name "productive confusion."

Yet the journey to the limits of the science of learning I have in mind is not a long one, for the most obvious thing such logic cannot explain is itself. My point of departure is a vantage point from which can be seen the myth making, the mythopoesis, that is at work in the core of modern reason and its pedagogies, those great dispellers of myth. My aim is not to see how myth can be added onto today's core business of education, that of production, but how those who work within it, teachers, are already and always bearers of myth.

The Myth of The-End-Of-Myth

> Everything seems pregnant with its contrary. (Marx 1978, p. 577)

An attempt to separate myth and knowledge lies at the base of modern epistemology. Myth was represented by modern advocates of knowledge as fiction, and a dubious form of story-telling at that, one fed by arbitrary belief and unbridled imagination. Over four centuries, pre-modern understandings of magic as a property inherent in the world have given way to the magical accomplishments of technology (Ellul 1964). Narratology has given way to epistemology (Flyvbjerg 1998), which is to say that the organizational power of cultural stories has given way to science.

Pure, unlived reason claimed the institutions of philosophy, politics, and economics. Religion, and with it myth, was relegated first to the status of private sustenance and later to the status of consumer preference. Traditions of practical, lived reason withered and ceded ground to accounts of (objective) reason and (subjective) emotion as polar opposites. Descartes replaced Plato's dualism of ideal and real forms and Christian myths of heaven and earth with a metaphysic in which rationality (mind) and materiality (body) occupy opposite sides of an unbridgeable divide (Plumwood 1993).

As they were de-mythologized, so too were Earth and its cosmos disenchanted (Berman 1981). The planet and its clockwork universe were to be colonized by observers rather than inhabited by participants. Space and time were to be described rather than imagined. The material world emerged as instrumental means to the end of technological control. Later, as industrialization took hold, it became clear that human life, too, was in the process of being disenchanted. By 1856, Karl Marx was able to observe that "all our invention and progress" are only "stultifying human life into a material force" (Marx 1978, p. 578).

It was in the same speech that Marx declared of modernity that "everything seems pregnant with its contrary" (Marx 1978, p. 577). He saw that modernity's motion is dialectical, its achievements paradoxical, its pronouncements ironical. A century later—after medical triumph upon triumph and two wars of a scale only modern technology could make—evidence of the "indefatigable self-destructiveness" of enlightenment was everywhere inscribed on modern life. It was clear that the agents of objective reason had paid "for the increase of their power with alienation from that over which they exercise their power" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972, pp. xi, 9).

The countercultural movements that subsequently took hold after the Second World War bear witness to the way many in modern societies seek relief from this alienation in a rebirth of myth. Faced with the modern opposition of reason and myth, such movements, especially in their ecological, therapeutic, artistic, and spiritual forms, have often sought to re-mythologize the world by rejecting reason.

Yet, despite official pronouncements to the contrary, myth was never stripped from the modern world. The paradoxical advance of modern enlightenment has

seen myth intensified just as it was dispelled by pure reason. Not only was it never relegated to the status of private fancy, a plaything of the New Age, myth is to be found at the core of the project of rational progress in the form of the myth of the-end-of-myth.

The myth of the-end-of-myth grew slowly in the centuries before the Enlightenment in the fertile ground of earlier myths. At the beginnings of the second Christian millennium, Christian myths of transcendence were launched on a path of transformation which was to see many of the meanings of divine agency transferred to technological agency. The death of God at the hand of reason deflected attention from the birth of the religion of technology (Noble 1997). In the present early years of a third millennium, this religion has in harness much of the mythic energy of western and many eastern societies. It is a religion defined by its anti-religious rhetoric, by its mythic belief in the unimportance of myth, and by its technological battle with death. It is a religion of lengthening lifespans buttressed by awesome militarism. It is a religion nonetheless faced with growing retaliation in the name of old religions drawing new strength from their refusal to submit to its universal designs.

The myth of the-end-of-myth has seen reason accompanied not by the suppression of mythic imagination, symbolism, and ritual, but by the channelling of these energies into the endeavors of public production and private consumption. The all-too-rational sums of economists are wedded to the mythic imaginaries (and images) found in advertising, entertainment, and politics, for example, which continue to re-invent older narratives of transcendence, with their age-old themes of adventure, conquest, homecoming, and immortality.

The Production of Education

> Yet all the knowledge on earth will give me nothing to assure me that this world is mine. You describe it to me and you teach me to classify it. You enumerate its laws and in my thirst for knowledge I admit that they are true. You take apart the mechanism and my hope increased. At the final stage you teach me that this wondrous and multi-coloured universe can be reduced to the atom and that the atom can be reduced to the electron. All this is good and I wait for you to continue. But you tell me of an invisible planetary system in which electrons gravitate around a nucleus. You explain this world to me with an image. I realize then that you have been reduced to poetry: I shall never know. Have I the time to become indignant? You have already changed theories. (Camus 1955, p. 25)

Modernity is a dynamic and contrary phenomenon, one continuing to grow, change, and fragment. Despite this plurality, the myth of the-end-of-myth has continued to be central to its paradoxical progress. Much of the unacknowledged responsibility for the reproduction of reason as a mythic project has fallen to the science of education. With the advance of reason, the divine and aristocratic authority of tradition and the craft of apprenticeship gave way to pedagogies built upon the first principles and fragmented expertise of science. As modern societies progressed towards the global capitalism of the present, the goals of scientific pedagogy narrowed

towards one fundamental aspiration: that of maximising the production and consumption of knowledge.

As Joseph Dunne has explained, this aspiration evolved out of the fundamentally new relationship established between knowledge and production by Enlightenment ideals:

> So long as knowledge stood apart from production, no society could afford to have more than a small minority devoted to the pursuit of knowledge through education; for it needed as many hands to the wheel as it could muster. And if by contrast our society tries to provide something like universal education, this is not because it is any less concerned than earlier societies with the imperatives of production; it is simply that the productive person is now the educated person. (Dunne 2005, p. 148)

Today, the maximization of the production and consumption of knowledge has become a means to the end of maximizing the production and consumption of technology. In earlier phases of modernity the alignment of production and knowledge allowed education to evolve as a project of emancipation; a project foundational to modern ideals of freedom, equality, and democracy. Along the way, however, knowledge has become increasingly subordinate to production. Despite the ennobling impulses that set it on its way, the subordination of knowledge to production has distorted learning about learning and deformed the practice of teaching. Particularly disturbing is the way in which universities, the keepers of pedagogy, have passed through a brief history as civic and egalitarian institutions—after their earliest role "in the promulgation of elite and oppressive ideologies" and their later contributions to early-modern imperialism—and seem on the way to becoming quasi-corporations, factories producing knowledge for a mass of consumers (Bishop 2004, pp. 32–33).

In the middle of the twentieth century Albert Camus (1955) warned that scientific pedagogies were making available all the knowledge on earth, but threatening forms of understanding by which modern humanity can know that it belongs to their world and it to them. Fifty years on, the challenge facing teachers has grown terrific. Presented with the Sisyphean task of passing on volumes of knowledge unthinkable even a generation earlier, teachers also shoulder the heavy responsibility of passing on understanding of a good reality, a reality at once nurturing and in need of being nurtured.

Despite its new context, however, the character of this challenge has changed little from that described a century earlier by John Dewey when he called upon teachers to manifest "the most perfect and intimate union of science and art conceivable in human experience" (Dewey 1959, p. 31). Although this challenge is to be faced in private life as well, it takes on an irreducibly public character in the school or academy. At the heart of teaching is the challenge of helping others to navigate a shared, diverse, and difficult world, a world that, with courage, may be inhabited freely. To teachers, although not to them alone, falls the task of revealing a reality that is not a prison of our own making. In this sense, classrooms and lecture halls are holons, whole parts of the world, gathering grounds that hold within them secrets of our humanity and prospects for what Dewey called "the right social growth" (Dewey 1959, p. 32).

The Practice of Teaching

> I want to recall to you aspects of an inter-subjective world, a dangerous and endangered world about which we need to choose to teach. We have somehow to understand this world and provoke others to understand it if we are in some fashion to transform it. (Greene 1995, p. 44)

Since Camus' warning about the homelessness that pure reason teaches, understanding of practical reason has begun to be re-established in several fields of scholarship, including those bearing on education. Frequently drawing upon premodern traditions, at the headwaters of which stands Aristotle's account of practical wisdom (Dunne 1993), and from the phenomenological and existential moments of early-twentieth-century philosophy—especially Martin Heidegger's contribution to them (Davison 2001)—such awareness is loosely definable as praxis philosophy (Bernstein 1972). Asserting the co-evolution of experience and reason, praxis philosophy has been important in educational philosophy (Greene 1978; Schwab 1978), as well as in ethics (Gilligan 1982; MacIntyre 1984), hermeneutics (Gadamer 1975; Rorty 1979); politics (Arendt 1958; Habermas 1974), philosophy of science (Kuhn 1996; Harding 1986), and sociology (Bourdieu 1977; Latour 1993).

What unites this mixed group of approaches as praxis philosophy is the attempt to situate knowledge. They focus attention on the embodiment, emplacement, and enactment of knowledge. They expose different aspects of the complex relationship between knowledge, understanding, and wisdom only by having recourse to exploring the worldly encounters of knowing bodies. They provide ways of observing the habits and the habitats—what collectively Pierre Bourdieu called *habitus* (Davison 2004)—in and through which the human organism learns.

An increasing number of curriculum theorists are becoming curious about the *habitus* of teachers (Bradbeer 1999; Dunne 2005; Greene 1995; Kesson 1999; Shulman 2004). Such curiosity has seen attention shift from the science of curriculum, with its "inveterate, unexamined and mistaken reliance on *theory*" (Schwab 1978, p. 287), towards "the living aspect of curriculum" (Bradbeer 1999, p. 23). It has led to re-affirmation that teaching is a craft before it is a technique. "Emphasising practices," suggests Dunne, may help to "combat the tendency endemic in schooling in almost all cultures towards a 'recitative script' " and to strengthen awareness of teachers as "practitioners in different domains who find ways of introducing pupils to the practices, and inviting them to become themselves practitioners" (Dunne 2005, p. 156). Yet a comprehensive understanding of the wisdom internal to the practice of teaching demands more than simply an emphasis on practice. It requires a reformulation of conventional assumptions about what it is to be a wise practitioner. It is not enough to develop and to transfer bodies of knowledge and frameworks for understanding. To have wisdom in teaching is also to develop and to transfer an imaginal capacity for social and personal transformation. This is a mythopoetic capacity, a mobilization of mythic energy that sustains and communicates creative judgement, empathetic perception, and moral inquiry.

Emerging discussion of mythopoesis in teaching has tended to rehearse the modern opposition of science and myth, finding in "mythopoetics … a wide range

of ideas embracing the inquiry processes and curriculum practices that confront the dominant rationality paradigm" (Kesson 1999, p. 88). Influenced by modern representations of myth as inherently subjective and thus inherently private, elaboration of mythopoesis often concentrates on aspects of personal consciousness and individual conscience. This focus has much to reveal, but may not be politically broad enough to expose the way in which the "dominant rationality paradigm" of teaching has itself a mythopoetic impulse. It may not expose the "dangerous and endangered world" about which Maxine Greene (1995, p. 44) properly urges us to teach.

Ideas of mythopoesis can be prompts for inquiry into ways in which the teaching of pure reason is not and was never fundamentally a theoretical endeavor. As Thomas Kuhn (1996) explained in *The structure of scientific revolutions*, in the reproduction of scientific theories pure reason is as embedded in mundane worlds as any other form of knowledge. Its embodiment may be overt, as in the dialogue of eyes, feet, and hands in the body of the driver of a car, or more covert, as in a stack of chemistry exam papers. But it is never exclusively one or the other: knowing is always an experience. The windowless lecture theatre with its seats bolted to the floor in unyielding tiers disciplines learners as effectively as does any conceptual framework. Surfing the internet teaches Cartesian dualism perhaps more tellingly, for being less conscious, than any dusty book or chalk scratchings. In reproducing the myth of pure reason, in making real a fiction about the immaculate conception of ideas, the production of education is profoundly embodied. As a practice, the production of education is in fact profoundly confusing, and in this fact lie possibilities for its transformation.

The Transformations of Productive Confusion

> Our transformative pedagogies must relate both to existing conditions and to something we are trying to bring into being, something that goes beyond a present situation. (Greene 1995, p. 52)

It was Kuhn (1996), also, who reminded a generation of scholars who had seemed to have forgotten that learning does not occur only through the linear accumulation of knowledge. It may occur through the dissolution of the frameworks of understanding on which hangs knowledge. It may occur through the productive confusion that results from learning by unlearning. Faced with the right question, the right event, the right moment, that to which we have long held may dissolve, melting into air, pitching us forward into a space about which we know little and within which we must hunt, urgently, even desperately, for new handholds. Kuhn's genius was to show that such collapse happens even where it is least expected, at the base of science. In the physical sciences, such revolutionary, nonlinear moments may be, as Kuhn argued, rare and relatively short-lived, leading to the formation of new frameworks within which a steady, linear accumulation of knowledge can once again take place.

In everyday life such collapse is much less rare and the confusion it produces often intensely personal, painful, and laced with irony. It may sometimes be joyous

and liberating, an experience in which, as Cummings so perfectly put it, "all ignorance toboggans into know" (Cummings 1960, p. 65). Such tumultuous movement is given common expression in intimate discourse, even if just to affirm the inexpressibility of an experience that reaches beyond language and beneath consciousness. Transformative dissolution of past understandings is often associated with such phenomena as existential crisis or angst, crises of faith, belief, or conscience, physical crises of injury, illness, and abuse, and transformations inherent in human temporality, such as birth, adolescence, mid-life, aging, and death. Although perhaps less dramatically, such dissolution is often visible in the beginning, breakdown, loss, or reformulation of personal relationships, identities, and aspirations. Such dissolution is often the stuff of myth.

While such crumbling of certainties and the confusion and possibilities for new, richer understandings that may follow in its wake is given voice on many a psychiatrist's couch, it has been ignored as a source of pedagogical insight in the production of education and in much critique of it. This neglect is understandable. Learning by dissolution defies the modern separation of reason and emotion, science and myth, and public and private knowledge. Yet it is precisely this defiance that invests nonlinear paths of learning with transformative potential in the contemporary practice of teaching. It is this that may "bring into being something that goes beyond a present situation" (Greene 1995, p. 52) something that is not just the next, logical step of the present. For learning by unlearning opens up mythopoetic possibilities for productive forms of confusion in the classroom that do not counter the science of education from outside, but that bring into empathetic inquiry the mythic energy that motivates it from within.

However, the fact of learning by dissolution also challenges modern interpretations of mythopoesis. For the ancient Greeks, at least according to Heidegger's (1977) reading of Aristotle, *poiesis* named human activity that elicits the world to bear meaning. This was a form of human production informed by *techne*, the rationality of craft. *Poiesis* named a practice of midwifery, a bringing into reality of culture out of a proto-world, a universe mysterious yet pregnant with meaning. The modern project of pure reason, however, has seen *poiesis* reduced to mere production, the making of meaning out of a fully formed, yet meaningless reality. *Techne* has been reduced to scientific technique, with the residue, art, relegated to spaces outside of reason altogether. Consequently, the idea of myth making, mythopoesis, is apt in modern trajectories of thought to refer to a process of fabrication stemming from human imagination.

The location of mythopoesis first and foremost with human imagination suggests that learning through unlearning results from errors in human knowledge. Frameworks collapse out of human misunderstanding and are rebuilt by the introduction of the resources education brings: additional information, more comprehensive research, new questions, reconstructed theories, and the rest. This is, of course and happily, often the case. Yet, if mythopoesis names the human craft, the practical wisdom of bringing forth stories out of a mythic source before and beyond human agency, learning by dissolution and confusion may tell not simply of human failings, but also of possibilities that exist for human encounter with a primordial reality.

Understood in this way, the mythopoesis at the heart of the practice of teaching is a craft of expanding and sensitizing human capacity for transcendent encounter, a craft for initiating contact between those who want to know and a knowing reality, an eloquent reality, a good reality.

In the production of education, confusion on the part of teachers has become something of a matter of shame. The suggestion that teachers ought to welcome, even to try and precipitate, such confusion in their students on the basis that it too may be productive of learning, is liable to be reprimanded as irresponsible. Consistency, certainty, and coherence have taken on almost sacred importance in the façade teachers are encouraged to build around them. How, then, might the craft of mythopoesis be sustained in the production of education?

In my experience, it is the present extreme sacredness of certainty that may make the briefest moments when teachers step out from behind this façade potentially powerful opportunities for mythopoesis. To juxtapose before students the latest statistics of human starvation in Africa and human obesity in Australia, without resolution but with a deeply felt, lifelong, and incoherent energy of incomprehension is not necessarily, in my view, to fail students (although it may be; mythopoesis is, after all, an elusive, delicate craft and not merely a tool). It is, I hope, to invite students into a language very different from that of problems and solutions. To call upon students to explain even a single advertising image is, potentially, to provoke unlearning about reason. It may lead, perhaps, to new learning about the myth of the-end-of-myth and thus about the sources of fear and desire that animate our age's mythic need for production. Consider, for instance, an advertising image I have found productive when discussing the politics of climate change. This glossy image juxtaposes a prestigious silver all-wheel sports automobile against a forbidding and deserted blue-black background of stormy violence, a violence unleashed by bearded gods in the clouds. As rain lashes the luminescent skin of this muscular vehicle, and as lightening forks from the hands of two violently jealous gods toward it, without apparent effect, the reader is offered only four words of text: "Security. Unlike any other." What, truly, are any of us to make of that?

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Chapter 5
Care of the Self: Mythopoetic Dimensions of Professional Preparation and Development

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Abstract Graduate study in higher and adult education prepares adults for professional practice in educational leadership and pedagogy. Central to practice is the self–other relationship, in which the practitioner enters into a relationship with an "other" for purposes of providing a service or bringing about change. Depth psychology suggests that this self–other relationship is imaginatively constructed and characterized by powerful emotional dynamics that often challenge the integrity of the practitioner's work. To be effective, practitioners must be able to empathically enter into these relationships without denying the other or losing the self. This process requires a deep sense of self-awareness, authenticity, and integrity, a set of personal attributes reflected in the development of self-knowledge. I refer to this process of developing self-knowledge as self-formation. Using a mythopoetic perspective grounded in Jungian and post-Jungian psychology, this chapter explores the process of self-formation in professional preparation within higher and adult education.

Introduction

For over twenty-five years, I have worked in educational programs that prepare individuals for professional positions in health care and higher and adult education. The individuals with whom I work range from undergraduate students to graduate and postgraduate students, as well as participants in continuing professional development. While the scholarly literature in these areas has long emphasized competencies and skills inherent within the job, my experiences with these programs have underscored the critical role that the self plays in how and what practitioners come to know (Dirkx 2005; Brockman and Dirkx 2006). Through their graduate education programs, students struggle with questions that betray the centrality of the self in their training: What does being in this program mean to me? Is this what I really want of my life? What is valuable and meaningful for me in this profession? Do I have what it takes to succeed? The interaction between the self and the learning and development process is so close and intimate that we often witness the reciprocal relationship between the nature of the self and the nature of the work.

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In this chapter, I refer to this process as "self-formation," a term that actually refers to iterative cycles of the self forming, re-forming, and transforming itself throughout one's life (Palmer 2004). Developing self-understanding and fostering self-formation represent fundamental aspects of lifelong learning (Chappell et al. 2003; West 2001). In different ways, self-formative processes characterize the work of the seasoned expert as much as they do the beginning novice. For ease of discussion, I use the term "professional development" to refer both to graduate programs in higher and adult education, as well as programs intended to foster continuing development of practitioners in these fields.

For the most part, the literature that focuses on preparing practitioners for higher and adult education is dominated by technical rational understandings of practice. The limitations of this perspective, however, as the primary way of thinking about professional development are evident in the numerous violations within the professions of the "social contract with the public they serve" (Sullivan 2005, p. 2). Prominent and at times lurid examples undermine the public's perception of this contract. A few school superintendents are accused of misusing district funds for personal use. A pathologist is suspected of falsifying an autopsy to protect his doctor friend from being accused of murder. A politician who for years spearheaded policy and legislation to protect children from predatory pedophiles is himself now accused of sending lurid and sexually suggestive messages to young men and boys. Professors in higher education use their positions to build research programs, consultancies, and lucrative speaking tours, meanwhile ignoring the learning needs of their undergraduate students. Then there is the whole sordid affair with Enron, Worldcom, Arthur Anderson, and others, with thousands of lives deeply affected by the despicable actions of a few well-educated and well-trained "professionals."

Sustaining the ethic of the social contract implicit in professionalism requires more than a technical or rational understanding of the rules and values inherent in such a contract. Commitment to this ethic arises fundamentally from a deep sense of self, from attention to less conscious and visible forces brewing from within. Ultimately, doing the right thing within a professional role is derived from an awareness of and deep connection with these inner forces (Neumann 1990; Palmer 1998, 2004; Quinn 1996).

Employing a mythopoetic perspective (Bradbeer 1998), some scholars have begun to explore the dynamic and creative role the unconscious plays in the process of learning and of self-formation, a process I refer to as "self-work" or "soul work" (Dirkx 1997). The idea of soul work represents a central process within self-formation in which we explicitly and intentionally engage the self within the process of lifelong learning. Soul work represents a hard, emotional, messy, uncertain, ambiguous, and ill-structured process, with no pat strategies, methods, or specific models to guide the way.

In this chapter, I argue for the need to augment our highly technical and rational conceptions of professional training and continuing education with an emphasis on the ongoing importance of self-formative processes—soul work—within the lives of our students and practitioners. Using professional development for higher and adult education as a particular context, I argue that self-formative processes are

associated with the mythopoetic functions of the unconscious (Bradbeer 1998), arise within the non-rational dimensions of our being, and express themselves through the self's imaginative engagement with the world. Mediating this process are key images that are revealed to us through emotional and affective experiences arising within our training and practice. In developing this position, I address several key points:

- We are increasingly recognizing the epistemic role of the self in professional practice and the need to attend to its formation and development.
- To more fully understand the process of self-formation, appreciation for the analytic role of the self in practice needs to be augmented with its expressive and mythopoetic functions.
- A mythopoetic perspective holds particular curricular and pedagogical implications for training and continuing professional development programs.

The Epistemic Contribution of the Self in Professional Development

Most professional development programs are largely shaped by a commitment to the development of practical expertise. As Schön (1983) suggests, however, our understandings of what constitutes "the practical" have been dominated for many years by a kind of technical rationality, in which we seek to specify clearly and unambiguously the particular tasks that a given job requires and the particular competencies necessary to perform these tasks, illustrating what Usher et al. (1997) refer to as vocational forms of practice. Vocational practices stress the importance of learner motivation and flexibility because they need to be fully responsive to changes in industry, in this case, the organization, policies, and practices of higher and adult education organizations and institutions. It is largely a way of thinking about practice that aims at effective adaptation to the needs and demands of an outer reality.

Schön (1983) and others (e.g. Bradbeer 1998), however, challenge this behavioral, technical, and highly rational conception of practice and the self of the practitioner. In exploring more deeply the phenomenological and interpretive nature of practice, Schön (1983) encourages practitioners from a variety of disciplines to go beyond the limiting constraints of technical rationality and to probe the messy and ill-structured nature that makes up much of what constitutes professional practice. In depicting practitioners engaged in conversations with their settings, Schön reveals the dialogical nature of professional practice, reminding us of the Nobel Prize winning geneticist Barbara McClintock's description of her craft as sometimes simply needing to lean into an ear of corn (Keller 1983).

Within the interpretive and critical traditions, several scholars in adult education have built on Schön's ideas of practice as messy and ill-structured, such as the exploration of practical intelligence by Tennant and Pogson (1995), the contextual nature of continuing professional education described by Barbara Daley (2000), and the political dimensions of program planning described by Cervero and Wilson (1994).

These perspectives stress the more constructive, intuitive, and subjective dimensions of practice. In contrast to technical rational views, they demonstrate the situated and constructed nature of knowledge in use within practice (Wenger 1998). Rather than simply an effective and efficient receptacle through which the requisite practice, knowledge, and skills are discharged, this view argues that an evolving sense of self is intimately bound up with what is learned and the work that is performed.

Within this interpretive tradition, self-formation is a kind of re-storying of the self within the context of practice (Wenger 1998), resulting in particular kinds of meaning perspectives or frames of reference (Mezirow 2000). The self is intimately involved in both how practitioners learn and what they learn. Self-work and self-formation involves construction and reconstruction of these frames of reference (Brookfield 2000; Mezirow 2000) and ultimately of one's sense of self (Chappell et al. 2003).

Moving beyond highly technical and rational conceptions of expertise provides a deeper understanding of the complexity and messiness of professional practice, and the nature and role of the self in that practice. With this move, the self of the practitioner now becomes less of an afterthought or a distraction and a more central idea in our thinking about the nature of practice. In interpretivist approaches to professional development, practice represents an extension of the practitioner self (Schön 1983). The self assumes a critical role in the process of knowing-in-practice and we begin to understand the importance of self-formation in lifelong learning (West 2001).

The interpretive and critical traditions help illuminate the centrality of the self and the re-storying process. The creative, imaginative aspects of this process, implied in the frequent use of the term "story," however, seem overshadowed by a continuing reliance on critical reflection on one's experiences as a central dynamic of the learning process (Mezirow 2000; Brookfield 2000). A growing body of scholarship within higher and adult education, however, challenges the primacy of rational and critical reflection in deep or transformative learning (Cajete 2004; Cranton 2006; Dirkx 2006b; English et al., 2003; Kazanjian and Laurence 2002; Kovan and Dirkx 2004; Lawrence 2005; O'Sullivan et al., 2002; Tisdell 2003). Stressing the importance of the aesthetic, personal, embodied, and spiritual dimensions, these scholars provide accounts of practice that are more vibrant and interactive, creating room for an appreciation of the role of the affect, emotions, imagination, and the spirit within the life of the practical. With their guidance, our understandings of practice and self-formation begin to reflect what Bradbeer (1998) refers to as the imaginal and mythopoetic dimensions of practice. Central to an understanding of the mythopoetic, however, is the role that affect and emotion play in mediating the self-formative process in professional development.

Emotion-Laden Experiences in Professional Development

Although we seldom discuss it in our graduate preparation programs in higher and adult education, the meanings and understandings we attach to learning and practice are heavily influenced by emotionally laden experiences that make up our everyday

work. These experiences range from emotions associated with particular occurrences or events to vague feelings or moods about one's work, career, and life direction. For example, in a previous publication (Dirkx 1997), I discussed an interaction that occurred within a graduate course that I was teaching on instructional methods. About halfway through the term we had developed a relaxed, comfortable, and informal environment within the group. After returning from a short break, I bantered in a kidding way with a couple of the group members about getting food on their assignments that were due that day. Several students laughed politely (I guess it was not all that funny) but Clara talked over this bantering with a frustrated and angry comment. "You know," she said, "I am getting so sick of group work in this class" (p. 80). Not expecting that kind of comment and caught somewhat off guard, I tried to be lighthearted and humorous in my response. My remarks, however, served only to infuriate her even more and she continued on something of a rant about all the teachers in the program who used group methods in their instruction. While a few other members of the class joined her in commenting on group work, most of the others appeared stunned by this rather dramatic turn of emotionality within the group. Trying hard not to be defensive, I mostly listened to these comments and criticisms, making an occasional comment in an intellectual fashion to what I considered to be errors in construing the research and theory of group instruction.

Because I considered Clara a friend, I felt betrayed, angry, and defensive. I also felt stuck. I knew that if I engaged this experience as a kind of "teachable moment" and further facilitated discussion around it, I would be playing into her hands and making worse precisely what she felt so angry about. Going on with the agenda felt like I would be ignoring a very significant event in the group. Not really knowing what to do, I meekly asked others for their opinions, observing at the same time the tension in the group grow very thick. I felt I needed to do something, so I moved into a lecture format that lasted the rest of the session. For the remainder of the term, the issue never came up again but it was clear we had lost something precious on that day. The group felt deflated and anemic and never seemed to regain the vitality it had going into that fateful meeting.

Many educational practitioners, in and out of the classroom, experience similar kinds of feelings with students, colleagues, and relationships with administrators. These are everyday sorts of occurrences within the workplaces of most organizations and institutions in higher and adult education. Resident physicians, reflecting emotional issues that characterize the practice of even seasoned practitioners (Balint 1964), struggle with powerful emotions and feelings around the chronically ill patients they are asked to care for (Mizrahi 1986). At times, specific events in practice can evoke vague or ill-defined feelings, such as moodiness, alienation, and a sense of lack of meaning, as in the case of Francis, a professor of education for twenty years who increasingly found himself struggling with feelings of self-doubt and a lack of purpose and direction (Dirkx 2006a). When working in teams or groups on class assignments, graduate students in education often face a flurry of emotional issues arising from the group's processes (Boyd 1991), which often threaten the integrity and meaningfulness of the learning process. Parker Palmer (1998, 2004) reminds us of teachers seeing the sun set on their careers, of losing heart.

In discussing what he calls "the emotional landscape of faculty life," Robert Kraft tells the story of a tenure-track professor who had just recently quit her position, describing how "The isolation and sterility of faculty life can be dangerous—perhaps toxic" (2002, p. 204). Among the emotions he has observed among faculty are loneliness and a deep desire to connect with others in meaningful ways.

In some instances, the emotional dynamics an individual experiences and expresses are more subtle and insidious. Several years ago, I reported a case study of a student—call her Mary—in our adult education program who was volunteering in an adult basic education program (Dirkx et al., 1993). Mary was working with a family that had recently immigrated from Laos. Because their ability to travel around the city was limited, she was providing tutoring within the family's home. The family quickly grew to like her and she, in turn, found increasing satisfaction and enjoyment in being able to help this family in their educational program. Over several weeks, she became more involved, occasionally eating meals with them and helping them run errands and similar activities that seemed to blur the lines of her professional relationship. One day Mary came to me, quite upset because the family had just asked her to co-sign a bank loan for a car. She had not responded to them immediately and sought help figuring out how to reply. In her heart Mary knew she could not comply with their request, but she also knew that they would interpret such a response as a betrayal of their friendship. Their relationship would be over. She was right. The family was deeply hurt by her refusal. Mary felt guilty for not doing what they requested and grieved their loss of friendship. What started as a sincere attempt to help a family in need ended with deep, emotional wounds for both the practitioner and her students.

These stories and examples are included here to illustrate the pervasiveness of emotion-laden experiences in higher and adult education, and to demonstrate that they arise within the lives of both teachers and students. Indeed, without them, professional work would seem lifeless and limp, uninspired and uninspiring. Less evident, however, within our professional education programs are the ways in which we make sense of these emotional-laden experiences. What do they have to say about the nature of the learning and the self-formation processes occurring within these programs?

Their presence in our work lives has evoked considerable literature across an array of disciplines. Despite this flurry of attention to emotions in work and learning (Imel 2003; Newmann 2006; Opengart 2006; Zembylas 2003), the persistent portrayal of emotions in learning, however, is one in which emotions are in the service of the ego, of our ongoing need to adjust to and meet the demands of our outer realities. Technical rational conceptions of self-formation implicitly reflect a sense of the self taking shape according to the doctrines established by the notion of professional expertise. Emotions and feelings represent subjective reactions to the practice situation and are not considered an integral dimension of coming to know what should be done and how. For this reason, they are marginalized and often considered potential threats to effective discharge of one's duties and responsibilities. Stress is placed on controlling or managing emotions (Bolton 2005; Frost 2003) and on the rational, empirical analyses of practice problems.

Interpretivist conceptions of self-formation provide a more prominent role for the self and stress the importance of narrative in this self-formation process, but the emotional dimensions of practice do not fare much better. Few of the scholars within this tradition openly explore, recognize, and integrate the emotional, affective dimensions of practice within their conceptions of professional expertise. The vast majority of professional preparation programs in education and the helping professions reflect a continuing preoccupation with outer world demands, minimizing or ignoring altogether what is beneath the surface (Staply 2006), the needs of the soul (Moore 1992; Palmer 1998, 2004; Whyte 1994).

If we listen closely to the stories of these emotion-laden experiences, however, we are reminded of Bradbeer's (1998) teachers whose stories seem to exemplify the expression of the imaginal, of an inner self seeking its voice in the world. Grounded in Jungian and post-Jungian thought, I argue for a point of view of the emotional and inner life in professional development that seeks to integrate more fully those aspects of self-formation that are inherent in the experiential, affective, relational, and imaginal dimensions of professional practice (Bradbeer 1998). I refer to this process as soul work (Dirkx 1997).

Emotions, Images, and Self-Formation

The sketches in the preceding section of the emotion-laden experiences within professional development and practice suggest that the self is integral to the relationships that the practitioner establishes with their subject, the context, and others within their practice setting. The depth and complexities of the self are revealed through powerful images and metaphors that are implicit within these experiences. These images represent the mythopoetic and imaginal functions of the unconscious dimensions of the self and provide a means for us to develop a more conscious dialogue with the different selves that populate our inner worlds (Dirkx 2001, 2006b; Hillman 1975; Moore 1992, 1996; Watkins 1984). Emotion-laden experiences, therefore, are not necessarily symptomatic of problems, pathologies, or a dysfunctional psyche. Rather, they can play an integral role in the process of knowing more deeply both our worlds and ourselves.

To consider a meaningful role of the emotions in the process of learning, however, especially learning associated with professional development, flies in the face of years of public and scholarly opinion. Christianity has long stressed the corrosive influence of the emotions on human character and spiritual commitment. Post-Enlightenment scholarship regarded the emotions as either not germane or potentially even dangerous to the pursuits of the detached, disinterested academic, as "impediments to proper considered judgment and intellectual activity" (Lupton 1998, p. 3). As Lupton points out, however, postmodernist and feminist thought have challenged these dominant views of the emotions, suggesting that emotions might not only be aligned with the process of knowing but also play an essential role in the process. Developing an embodied perspective on the emotions, Lupton

argues that the "emotions play a central role in contributing to our sense of self, to our subjectivity" (1998, pp. 5–6).

I consider emotion and self-formation within the theoretical frameworks of Jungian (Singer 1994) and post-Jungian psychology[1] (Samuels 1985), particularly the work of Hillman (1975, 2000a, b), Moore (1992), Watkins (1984, 2000a, b), and Corbin (2000). From this perspective, emotion-laden experiences that occur within professional development represent manifestations of an ongoing process of self-formation or individuation. In Jungian psychology, scholars focus on the unconscious and its relationship to conscious life and experience. As with emotion, the unconscious has traditionally been regarded as irrational and potentially subversive of and dangerous to consciousness. In contrast to traditional Freudian views, however, most Jungians regard the unconscious as a creative and potentially constructive force within our lives. It is generally regarded as relatively autonomous from our conscious selves (or egos), seeking expression largely through non-rational, symbolic means. Its truly creative and constructive expressions depend on our ability and willingness to establish an active, conscious relationship with its contents and processes (Singer 1994).

Jung regarded the bulk of psychology as concerned with what he referred to as "tending the blossom" of the flower, rather than its roots embedded deep beneath the surface (Singer 1994). By this he meant that the field of psychology and most of the public are concerned with maintaining or restoring an ability to adapt to and function in reality in a manner that contributes to a productive life. Concern for the blossom, Jung argued, reflected a preoccupation with being productive as opposed to being creative. While stressing the importance of functioning in the everyday world, the latter, Jung repeatedly asserted, is far more important to understanding ourselves and to the timeless search for something greater than ourselves (Singer 1994; Whitmont 1969). Creativity arises from developing and maintaining an active relationship with the unconscious, that is, from attention to the "rhizomes," that are part of our being that lies beneath the surface and beyond conscious awareness.

The unconscious is the myth-making center of the human person, the location from which we generate the images, myths, and stories that we largely unconsciously use to guide and make sense of our lives (Bond 1993; Hillman 2000a; Watkins 2000a, b). Connecting with the unconscious and fostering a creative approach to our lives are mediated through what Jungians refer to as the "symbolic approach" (Bond 1993; Watkins 1984; Whitmont 1969). That is, the symbolic approach involves developing an awareness of and appreciation for the various ways in which the unconscious populates individual and collective consciousness with powerful images, symbols, and stories. Much of the early history of depth psychology, of which Jungian psychology is a part, stressed the importance of the

[1] While I realize that important theoretical differences exist between Jungian and post-Jungian psychology, in this analysis I stress their similarities rather than these differences. For this reason, I will refer to Jungian and post-Jungian psychology as simply Jungian psychology.

analytic process and dreams in fostering such a relationship with the unconscious (Watkins 1984). More recently, however, post-Jungians have stressed the critical importance of the imagination in our everyday lives and the ways in which the unconscious expresses itself through sometimes quite ordinary and routine experiences (Hillman 1975; Moore 1992, 1996).

The unconscious makes its content known or visible to consciousness through manifestation of the symbol or image (Corbin 2000; Hillman 2000a; Watkins 1984, 2000a, b), which is spontaneously generated by the unconscious and remains relatively autonomous from ego consciousness. According to Hillman, "when Jung uses the word image, he does not mean a memory or after-image. Instead he says his term is derived from poetic usage, namely a figure of fancy or fantasy image" (Jung, quoted in Hillman 2000b, p. 117). That is, the term "image" does not refer to an aspect of one's outer reality reflected within consciousness. Rather, the image is a metaphorical, poetic expression of the unconscious and should be understood on its own terms. Watkins (2000b) understands the image that arises within consciousness

> as the best possible way of representing meanings as yet unknown or not fully grasped. We ask less "What does this image mean?" and more "What are the images intrinsic to the activities, thoughts, and feelings I am engaged in?" What images am I in when I feel exhausted, when I am shy or ambitious, when I am relating to my husband, child or my own body? (2000b, p. 198)

In arguing for the importance of the image in our lives, Jungian psychologists emphasize imaginal ways of knowing, in contrast to perceptual knowing. According to Patricia Berry, "A fantasy image is sensate, though not perceptual; i.e., it has obvious sensual qualities—form, colour, texture—but these are not derived from external objects. On the other hand, perception has to do with objective reals—what I see is real and there" (2000, p. 94). In considering images and the imaginal mode, reference to an objective reality is not relevant. The image points to something equally real within the psyche of the person but, as an image, it never refers directly to an outer reality. These two modes of knowing reflect fundamentally different psychic functions and it is this observation that makes working with the image in its own right so important. Emotions help us sense the image within our particular experiences (Hillman 2000a) and, in so doing, contribute to an elaboration of our imaginal mode of knowing and the multiplicities of being that make up who we are.

In working with these images, we further animate our conscious being. In the final section of this chapter, we will briefly explore the curricular and pedagogical implications this approach to self-formation might hold for professional development. First, however, we need to say a little more about what all of this has to do with self-formation.

From a Jungian perspective, self-formation reflects the dynamics of individuation (Singer 1994), a process in which we gradually differentiate the self from the conditioning of early family and other external contexts, as well as from one's current environment. Through the influence of individuation, we find ourselves asking, "How am I a part of that which surrounds me, and how am I different" (Singer 1994, p. 134). Individuation helps differentiate between the "I" and "not-I," a problem

clearly evident in the case of Mary, whom I discussed earlier, as well as in many other aspects of professional practice (Balint 1964; Mizrahi 1986; Palmer 2004; West 2001). The process of individuation represents the differentiation, conscious realization, and integration of the potentials or possibilities within the human person. We come to recognize and develop deeper relationships with various structures of the psyche, such as the persona, the shadow, and the anima and animus (Singer 1994). As our relationship with these aspects of the self becomes more conscious, we are able to realize more fully the authenticity of who we are, as opposed to an image of the self conforming to and part of a collective. True relationships with the other, Jung argued, were only possible through this deep realization of the self of the person.

The process of individuation reveals itself within our lives through the manifestation of image, story, and myth (Bond 1993; Whitmont 1969). Images represent symbolic threads of our broader story or myth and are often evoked and revealed through emotion-laden experiences. This is what is meant by the imaginal or mythopoetic functions of the psyche. In paying attention to and nurturing the imaginal, we begin to sense at a deeper level the multiplicity that makes up the self, of who we are or intend to be. Rather than being guided by a single, unitary image of the self and interpreting all other experiences not conforming to that image as deviant or negative, we learn to experience and embrace a kind of multiplicity of selves, each related to each other but each also having its own energy flow and need for expression in our lives.

For example, in one of the examples I described earlier, Francis's doubt, purposelessness, and struggle for meaning in his work is as much a part of him as is his deep caring for teaching and his students. My confrontation with Clara revealed a vulnerable, defensive teacher cohabiting with a confident, sensitive group facilitator. The experiences of Mary in an adult literacy program suggested that she thought of herself as a deeply caring, sensitive, and responsive teacher. But in this tutoring experience, she came face to face with a self needing to be loved and cared for, a self of which she was not consciously aware and that, in her relationship with the family, had its own agenda. At a deeper level, these experiences represent expressions of various aspects of the unconscious seeking voice within a conscious world. As we become aware and begin to work with these imaginal expressions, they can become more fully integrated aspects of our own stories or myths.

Professional development, by its very nature, evokes a sense of self, of who we are within our various practice contexts. When we talk with practitioners, their stories often revolve around those aspects of practice that most evoke emotion and affect (Intrator 2002; Kovan and Dirkx 2004; Mizrahi 1986; West 2001). It is as if they feel a need to provide expression to something ineffable, intangible, nonrational within their work lives. The stories are metaphoric, at one level perhaps describing aspects of lived experience but, at another, they stand in for dimensions of the experience not fully accessible through conscious, perceptual modes of knowing. The latter points to the imaginal or mythopoetic dimensions of professional development.

This creative, life-giving force within the psyche is as critical to our sense of being professional as is the sense of feeling skilled, knowledgeable, and competent. While the latter might get us through the demands of our everyday reality, it is only the former that can fully sustain us in the long run (Palmer 2004). Sooner or later, we all run into "the wall" of meaninglessness within our work, times when we come dangerously close to burn-out and to losing heart (Intrator 2002; Palmer 1998). Similar to the long-term commitments exhibited by environmental activists who nurture hope against all odds (Kovan and Dirkx 2004), in these moments we seem called to attend to the broader movement of our lives. In the concluding section, I will explore how I incorporate an imaginal and mythopoetic perspective within the preparation of individuals intending to be practitioners in higher and adult education.

Imaginal Method: Working with Symbols and Images

In describing how we can integrate the imaginal and mythopoetic within our educational practices, I draw on my previous work in this area (Boyd 1991; Dirkx 1997, 2001, 2006a, b) and offer some additional ideas. Perhaps one of the first challenges is to awaken and attend to matters of the soul. As suggested earlier, soul manifests itself within the interface of the inner life of the individual and the outer contexts of the world the individual inhabits. In the case of professional preparation, this interface involves the self of the practitioner in relationship with the subject matter or the social and cultural contexts of one's practice (West 2001), a relationship that is often perceived to be emotion-laden. When perceived symbolically and metaphorically, these relationships come to be understood as evocative expressions of unconscious content (Bond 1993; Singer 1994; Whitmont 1969).

Thus, integrating the mythopoetic within our teaching and learning requires attention to the latent as well as the manifest aspects of experience. A student's anger or frustration with trying to learn a technical skill may tell us which aspects of practice they are struggling with, but it may also convey important information about the student's relationship to himself or herself. Behind this emotional reaction, is there a sense of self that never measures up, a self that constantly falls short, that consistently feels inferior? Or perhaps the emotional reaction suggests something about the rightness of this line of work for the individual. Such emotional expressions can often convey important messages emanating from the person's unconscious and suggesting aspects of the self needing attention. These emotional expressions often take the form of images or metaphors and, if we are not watching for them, they often go unnoticed. Such manifestations of the deeper, creative dimensions of the self populate the everyday pedagogical world of professional preparation. We simply have to notice and take seriously the meaning of their expression within these contexts.

The learning environment also plays a critical role in nurturing the mythopoetic. Because the mythopoetic expresses the creative and the imaginative, it also displays

concern for the esthetic (Bradbeer 1998). Physical characteristics of learning environments evoke various dimensions of the emotional self. Does the space feel cluttered, messy, cold, uninviting? Or do the physical surroundings evoke a sense of structure, warmth, and intimacy? Do we attend to what may be displayed on the walls, the kind and nature of seating, or how the furniture is arranged? Chairs or tables lined up in rows often convey a different message than if they are arranged in a circle or in other ways in which participants may readily see and face each other. Circles and rows are themselves metaphorical of deeper, archetypal dimensions of the human psyche and often evoke related unconscious content within groups and their members. While I am not necessarily advocating the use of seemingly exotic arrangements, such as candles or altars within the classroom, attention to the everyday physical elements of our learning environments can help us further connect with the mythopoetic in professional pedagogy.

In addition to its physical characteristics, the learning setting evokes the mythopoetic through its evolving socio-emotional environment. Parker Palmer (2004) reminds us how important the emotional quality of our learning settings are to the work of the soul. My story about Clara and how our interaction essentially derailed the work of our group illustrates the power of the socio-emotional dimensions of the learning setting and how, through this aspect of the learning environment, the soul may feel either excluded or invited. The loneliness and lack of connection that Robert Kraft (2002) describes as characteristic of the lives of many faculty members also reflects the influence of the socio-emotional dimensions at an organizational level. This dimension of learning is evident even when the learning "setting" is broader and more inclusive, like that of the professional culture described by West (2001) in the self-directed and lifelong learning of physicians. In these cases, the socio-emotional characteristics of the professional culture can serve to evoke powerful, emotional-laden images that can help the professional develop a working, conscious dialogue with contents of the unconscious. Professionals are nested within ever-expanding socio-emotional contexts, all of which, to varying degrees, influence the practitioner's experience of the self within the milieu of his or her craft. Students within training and professional development programs are no less subject to the evocative influences of these varying levels of socio-emotional context.

Self–other relations also reflect a significant location for the manifestation of the mythopoetic within professional practice. Among the possible forms of relationship through which we may find its expression are the practitioner's relationships and interactions with teachers or faculty, with one another, with the group or cohort of which he or she may be a member, and the group's relationships with other perceived groups. Graduate programs in higher and adult education often use small groups and seminars as a major instructional methodology. Significant portions of instructional time are spent by students working in small groups and reporting back and interacting with other groups in the class. Yet, for the most part, relatively few instructors attend to the emotional dynamics that characterize these instructional settings. Influenced by rational conceptions of learning, these teachers continue to stress the mastery and analysis of information and development of cognitive skills.

If, however, we develop an awareness of and sensitivity to emotion-laden images, we begin to perceive the emotional and imaginal richness that groups represent. They are powerful emotional structures that are capable of evoking archetypal images among the participants and the group as a whole. Examples of archetypal images documented for group experiences include the group as mother, the father image, and the child and hero archetypes (Boyd 1991). As these images are aroused within the group experience, they often evoke within some members issues within their personal experiences that constitute aspects of their sense of self. For example, the group may be perceived as a nurturing mother but it could also be experienced as threatening and potentially smothering. Frequently, group experiences elicit authority issues among members for whom they may have conflicting emotions or experiences. At times, for groups experiencing confusion, uncertainty, and lack of direction, a central figure may emerge, who sometimes can come to represent for the group a mythical hero figure who will lead the group out of its seemingly chaotic state. Boyd (1991) demonstrates how participation in small group work, when facilitated appropriately, can contribute to the group members' growing awareness and working through of related personal issues that represent the core of who they understand themselves to be.

In addition to emotion-laden images that characterize the self–group relationship, similar emotions frequently evolve within the relationships and interactions between group members. At the interpersonal level, we often witness powerful affect. Group members can become recipients of one another's projections (Staply 2006). In these situations, individuals unconsciously project undesirable or anxious aspects of themselves onto others, so that they can both experience and reject these aspects of themselves. If they fail to take ownership of their projections, these dynamics can jeopardize communications and even hurt or destroy relationships and entire groups. When approached consciously, such emotion-laden interactions provide individuals with information about themselves and the contents of their unconscious selves. For example, Clara's comments about group work resulted in initial conceptions of her role in the group that were not terribly flattering. I was angry with her and, at first, saw her as a disruptive malcontent. As I reflected on my own response, I realized that her actions might have actually tapped into some of my own deep ambivalence about group work and forced me to confront issues that for me remained unresolved. Why is it so important for me that everyone subscribes to the value and importance of group work, that they see it the way I do? When approached symbolically, such interactions can provide us with a wealth of information and experiences on which to reflect and ponder.

Beyond pedagogical considerations, the use of text also contributes to arousing the imaginal within teaching and learning. Of course, not all texts have the same symbolic value for learners, and a text that one student finds evocative and powerful another may regard as simply obtuse and boring. Many years ago while I was pursuing a nursing degree, I was studying for an upcoming exam. Within this experience, a paragraph within an obstetrics/gynaecology text contributed to my decision to quit nursing school, a decision that dramatically altered the course of my career. Perhaps the most powerful characteristic of this paragraph was its absolutely blandness. As

I sat in the university library, reading it over and over, and trying to understand and remember what felt like an overwhelming amount of information, I gradually grew increasingly angry, first at the text, then at the author, and finally at the program in which I was enrolled. Within my head a wild and chaotic conversation was occurring. I was talking to myself about myself, seeing myself as a nurse and then not as a nurse, of failing and then selecting a more appropriate path. I am quite sure neither the author of this text nor the instructor who required this text envisioned this kind of learning experience for its potential audience. Yet, this seemingly bland piece of text had aroused within me something powerfully latent, something just below the surface eager to gain expression. After I made my decision, I packed up my books and rode my bike home, feeling incredibly free and lighthearted and eager to share my great news with my spouse.

Students within my classes frequently share the emotional effects that some of the texts that they are required to read have had on them. Some of these texts are novels or biographies but others are more traditional texts, written by scholars within a particular academic discipline for the purpose of providing newcomers with a helpful introduction to the field. For example, a student who read the biography *Conversations with Dvora* by Lieblich (1997) as part of a seminar on transformative learning changed the whole course of her doctoral program. She attributed this redirection to the effect that this book had on her. Another student found that a reading about the role of labyrinths in transformative learning reawakened within her the powerful effect of her own personal experience with a labyrinth. A middle-aged woman studying adult development came into class one summer afternoon bursting with excitement and joy. After years of trying to figure out what was going on in her life, she said, the readings from Erickson, Levenson, and other adult development scholars had had the effect of someone turning on a light in the darkened room of her life. The readings helped her begin to see herself in a different perspective and contributed to some sense making that had eluded her for years.

In addition to novels, biographies, and autobiographies, I also use poetry and film to augment our more traditional texts. As with texts, these materials serve as a kind of canvas onto which the students often project various dimensions of their own lives. Through the images and metaphors that make up these projections and experiences, students help make visible aspects of their unconscious selves. For example, many young women identify with the main character in the film *Educating Rita*. In seeking to use education to find herself, Rita's struggles against her class, culture, and oppressive husband resonate with the experiences of many female students.

These pedagogical and curricular strategies provide the means for fostering a connection with and relationship to emotional-laden images that represent the spontaneous, creative, and expressive dynamics of the unconscious. Group work, interactions, and texts generate these images but it remains for the person to work with these images in a manner that allows for their full voice and expression within our lives. Writing, particularly the use of personal journals, provides a means for establishing and maintaining a dialogical relationship with these images (Progoff 1992). In using writing and journals, students work with the emotion-laden images

that may arise within group experiences or their interactions with a text. This process provides opportunities for them to describe more fully the nature of these images, to reflect on other experiences they have had in which they encountered similar images, and to connect these images with similar collective concerns, as may be manifest in popular culture, fairy tales, or mythology.

In several courses that I teach, students are encouraged to select an emotion-laden image or issue that may have been evoked by class discussion or their readings. In the first part of their journal writing, they are asked to write freely around this image for a limited period of time, usually no more than five to ten minutes. In the second part of their journal, the students are then directed to reflect on their free writing in terms of themes that may be evident or how what they have written relates to their previous journal entries. They are also requested to reflect on and take note of emotions or feelings evoked during the free writing. At first, students report feelings of awkwardness and uncertainty with the process. As they continue to work with the method, however, they become less self-conscious and their free writing entries become more spontaneous.

Conclusion

While the preceding section describes pedagogical and curricular strategies that I use within my own teaching, they characterize approaches of individuals and not the program as a whole or the broader contexts of graduate preparation in adult and higher education. Much more work is needed to explore and give voice to expressions of the imaginal and mythopoetic within professional development programs. Because of the predominance of technical rationality in shaping our conceptions of learning and pedagogical and curricular methods to foster learning, we often marginalize or do not even perceive the life of the soul in these programs. Yet, professional development and the lifelong learning associated with it (West 2001) are all about self-formation and, as we have seen, formation of the self arises from the profound movements and relationships established with one's inner life. It represents a process in which the work of the world and the contexts in which this work is performed evokes within the practitioner an imaginative engagement of the deep strata of the psyche, the unconscious. This engagement gives voice to these deeper strata through the emotion-laden images that spring forth in consciousness within the context of our everyday practices.

Scholars such as Bradbeer (1998), Cranton (2006), Intrator (2002), Palmer (1998), and West (2001) are, in different ways, contributing to our understanding of the complexity that constitutes the nature of lifelong learning within professional development. Yet the sense remains of considerable work to be done. Even in seminars and programs aimed at exploring this dimension of adult learning and development, we often find ourselves gingerly tiptoeing around discussion of these issues, as if walking through eggshells. Traditional conceptions of pedagogy and curriculum represent powerful social norms that many of us have studiously internalized, and

it will take considerable effort to reconstruct a deeper, more soul-oriented understanding of professional development. Works such as the current volume and others cited here offer hope for the re-emergence of the imagination within our professional lives and, as Moore (1996) suggests, the re-enchantment of everyday life.

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Chapter 6
Imagination and Mythopoesis in the Science Curriculum

Timothy Leonard

Abstract In this chapter the author attempts to develop the theoretical underpinnings of a version of the mathematics and science curriculum with an emphasis on imaginative story-telling, reasoned argument based on these stories, counter-stories that expose the inadequacies of the original story, and the artful display and communication of scientific information.

Introduction

> After the feet of beauty fly my own. (Millay 1943, p. 10)

The curriculum in mathematics and science is high drama. As such it can be considered an artefact of imagination rendered through mythopoesis in the interest of beauty. It is a virtual autobiography of the human mind as it is engaged in understanding itself in the world. It is a set of stories about the ancients, such as Democratus and Archimedes; of Enlightenment figures such as Galileo and Newton; and of moderns such as Einstein and Gödel. The stories move from compact mythical moments, such as J. D. Watson's taping the sign "DNA→ RNA→protein" above his desk to the detailed and elegant demonstration model of the double helix Watson and Francis Crick erected in their laboratory in Cambridge. In this chapter I attempt to develop the theoretical underpinnings of this version of the mathematics and science curriculum with an emphasis on imaginative story-telling, reasoned argument based on these stories, counter-stories that expose the inadequacies of the original story, and the artful display and communication of scientific information. But I must begin with an explanation of the role of beauty in this drama.

Science ordinarily is thought of as a search for truth, yet when one considers science as a search for beauty whole new vistas open up for the mathematics and science educator. Beauty is not thought of here as some fixed Platonic ideal, but rather as the practice and consequence of disciplined, imaginative, reasonable, and continuously revisable discourse among caring, respectful, and open inquirers. It is what one finds when one mindfully engages in that most admirable of human experiences:

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conversation. Quite simply, science and mathematics education may well be understood as the shared practice and search for that which is most admirable in the human condition.

This requires imagination. "Wildest dreams are the necessary first steps toward scientific investigation," said Charles Sanders Peirce in his Lowell Lectures of 1892 (cited in Wiener 1958, pp. 231–249). It is the wild, the fantastic imagination that grounds the stories that teachers tell to engage their students. It is the realistic imagination that enables them to shed the mythic dress of those stories to grasp the bare bones of real relationships among variables, and express those relationships in beautifully precise ways. The science writer Lewis Thomas (1975) exemplifies these twofold functions of imagination (the fantastic and the real) when he invites his readers to imagine the unimaginable: a form of intelligent life supported not by oxygen but by gases noxious to humans; and then makes the claim that if there is intelligent life somewhere else in the universe, we can be sure of the presence there of nothing familiar to us, with the possible exception of committees. Where there is intelligent life there are meetings, and systems of communication. If humans were to send out communications to these other life forms, Thomas, in a further move, suggests that we send the Bach quartets.

Imagination is where the stories that form the basic myths of culture take their origin. Universities, schools, classrooms, and their curriculum form a treasure trove of stories that are the foundation of the disciplines of knowledge including math and science. On this version of the curriculum, teachers can well be understood as myth makers.

The work of Dominic Crossan, as he reflected on Sheldon Sacks' book, *Fiction and the shape of belief*, is very useful here (Crossan 1976). Crossan writes of five types of stories that, in my view, constitute the realm of myth as it connects imagination with insight into the real. These stories may be called myths, apologues, tales, satires, and parables, and in some respects they correspond to Thomas Kuhn's (1964) description of the history of science.

Myths, in the Crossan framework, constitute a world. The story of the double helix is such a story. It is a story of godlike persons, Francis Crick, J. D. Watson (1958), Rosalind Franklin, and Linus Pauling. As they fly after the feet of beauty they collaborate and compete, work with each other, against each other, and resort to trickery. Like the Bible and the Greek myths, the story portrays the human condition in heroic ways as it seeks beauty, yet hides nothing, including deceptions and murderous thoughts. In the sense that it includes the full gamut of human emotions as the drama unfolds, the myth is beautiful, providing insights into the path of scientific discourse and discovery as the lived experience of real people. And the world this particular myth constitutes for the scientists and the world at large is stupendous. It reveals the gene—the key to life in all its forms as it differentiates and integrates over time.

Apologues portray reasoned argument based upon the original myth. They extend the myth so that the elements of the story get sorted out and scientists, in a process that has been described by Kuhn as "normal science," enable each other and the general public to discern the implications of the myth. The story of genetically engineered recombinant human insulin, including the details of why that breakthrough was genetically possible and socially significant, would be such a story, as would the

development of the genome project, its completion in 2003, and the continuing work of analysing the data of that project. As myths tend to be heroic stories, and foreground the fantastic imagination, the apologues of normal science tend to focus more on details, and require strong exercise of the realistic imagination. In both sets of stories, however, artful yet precise visual displays of data are required.

Tales, on the other hand, focus on the consequences of truths told in the myths and apologues. They tell us more of the meaning of these findings in ordinary human existence: the efficacy of human insulin in diabetic patients, the stories of how genetic engineering has already worked to cure diseases, the potential of stem-cell research.

Tales can also engage students in explicit discussion of the frequent conflict between the fantastic and the realistic imagination through the analysis of science fiction. What in *Jurassic Park* or *Star Wars* accurately reflects the shared discourse of the scientific community, and what is pure fantasy? They can even address the Faustian-like bargain that addresses us when we consider the abolition of disease, or the ecological consequences of the genetic alteration of grains. Not to address such questions within the science curriculum is to leave them up to unimaginative and uninformed moralizers and sensationalists or soulless profiteering fanatics who are not interested in the search for beauty. On the other hand, it is the very core of beauty to discuss with care and openness the consequences of scientific discovery.

What Crossan called satires and parables are described by Kuhn as stories of anomalies, or instances that run counter to the basic myth. Sooner or later all myths betray their incompleteness or their contradictions (Goldstein 2005). The discovery of electromagnetism, for instance, eventually led to the realization that Newton's account of motion and force was incomplete, contradicted much evidence, and needed a more comprehensive account. The story of the many anomalies in Newton's theory and how they were documented and ultimately transcended in the discoveries of relativity and quantum mechanics is as dramatic a tale as *The odyssey* or *Hamlet*. This story has been told in the Public Broadcasting System's October 2005 program in the NOVA series called *Einstein's big idea* with sufficient drama to engage many a middle school or high school classroom. The counter-stories point up the anomalies and contradictions in sometimes humorous ways yet often have nothing to offer to take the place of the myth. Such stories remain integral to the drama and the conversation, for eventually they establish conditions under which new visions and Peirce's wildest dreams can flourish, new discoveries become possible, and the conversation can go on. The beauty of mathematics and science education is to engage students in dialogue with these stories. Thus they become participants in the drama.

An Example from Montessori Education

Maria Montessori understood well the centrality of imagination, story, drama, and beauty in science education. "Human consciousness," she said, "comes into the world as a flaming ball of imagination" (Montessori 2003, p. 10). She had contempt

for education in the sciences that required endless memorization of facts and formulas which the students have not had an opportunity to visualize or imagine.

An acquaintance of mine, who is a primary grade Montessori teacher and to whom I give the fictional name Gayle Chandler, implements the Montessori idea in the following manner. In a darkened, quiet room, armed with a flash bulb ready to flash and a CD ready to play Richard Strauss' *Thus spake Zarathustra* at the right time, Chandler begins the school year telling her first, second, and third graders this story:

> In the beginning, before you were born, before your mother and father were born, before your grandparents and great grandparents were born, before there were even people on earth, before there was an earth! There was nothing … nothing at all. Nothing except bigness of space, no beginning, no end, just darkness and cold. If you were there, your breath would turn to ice it was so cold, and so dark, that you could not see your hand in front of your face. In the middle of that cold and dark appeared a cloud of atomic particles, a whirling ball of gases spinning madly off into space. As they moved, they came together, and they EXPLODED. A radiating hot ball of fire created light that filled the empty darkness, so hot that you would turn to a cinder ash just to look at it. Soon galaxies appeared with stars so far apart that today it takes millions of years for their light to reach us even though light travels 186,000 miles in just one second. … One of these blazing specks in this infinite dark space was our sun, which in turn gathered balls of energy and matter giving birth to our solar system. Our earth then was a red hot ball still spinning hotly arranging itself in layers with light paste liquid floating to the top while the heavier sank down to the very center according to the laws of gravity. (Kahn 1985, p. 3)

Gayle continues the story, telling of the cooling of the crust of the earth, the remaining hotness of its interior, the ensuing volcanic activity, and the eventual coming of rain, creating rivers, then oceans of water, until the earth was "stone, wet, and fire." She tells of how water carved the stone into mountains and valleys, how some rocks were pounded into sand, and how, "as the water calmed, and the sun shone forth, invisible to the eye, life began to stir" (Kahn 1985, p. 15). After telling the story, Gayle has students examine each of six "impressionistic charts" which depict significant moments in the story. She also has ready 20 hands-on "experiments," which the children can perform to illustrate various features of the story. For example, to illustrate gravity and the layering of minerals in the earth, she has a test tube in which they pour honey, water, and oil, and then turn it upside down and see what happens to the three materials.

The story establishes a context within which the students then work with various materials to reinforce the sense that they each are participants in this unfolding story of the universe. Gayle tells other stories, of the origins of life, the story of the coming of human beings, and of communication through language and mathematics. Gayle wants her students to develop a sense of wonder about the universe, a realization that everything in it, including they themselves, has an indispensable work to perform as participants in its ongoing story. Reading, writing, listening, speaking, learning math, science, history, and geography, art and music become ways of participating in this majestic story.

It is important to notice the fantastic and the real functions of imagination in this scenario. For instance its implicit teleology that humans and their culture are the

end purpose of the big bang is fanciful yet not necessarily without beauty. It provides a context—a world—in which human activity matters, for its consequences are real. It takes a long time, perhaps a lifetime, for students to sort out which details of such a story they will take and which they will leave but, in the meantime, their realistic imagination is engaged in the experimental visualization of physical laws that are integral to the story. These experiments serve as apologues to the basic myth, and the Montessori *Timeline of life* provides myriad tales that flesh out the consequences and meaning of the big bang.

The Montessori story of the big bang along with its experiments and timelines possesses drama, beauty, and power, yet it has been faulted for paying scant attention to counter-stories. However, critics would do well to note that this cosmic myth is part of elementary education, and when Montessorians move on to secondary education the complexity of science and the world of work is introduced in a concrete way rarely experienced in other curricula. Taken as a whole, the Montessori science and mathematics curriculum exemplifies a curriculum grounded in imagination and mythopoesis.

Science Classrooms as Communities of Discourse

Gayle Chandler is a myth maker when she tells these stories and engages her students in their timelines and experiments. As a myth maker she is establishing a discourse community in which students and teacher listen, speak, utilize visual expressions and gestures, and collaborate on small voyages of scientific discovery. In these collaborations they—students and teacher—mimic, perhaps unwittingly, the collaborative behaviour of the scientific community. There one finds the curiosity, the imagination, the imperfect expression, the competitiveness, and sometimes downright ill-will one finds in all human drama. This was recognized as long ago as 1966, when Arthur King and John Brownell described the similarities and differences between professional discourse communities and classrooms (King and Brownell 1966).

The work of King and Brownell has been recently taken up by linguistic scholars with specific concern for the ordinary language of children and adolescents and the technical language of the science classroom (Yerrick and Roth 2005). One such scholar, Cindy Ballenger, has found that students perform better on science assessments when they have the chance to build their own understanding of scientific principles and theories in their own words (Ballenger 2005, cited in Thompson 2006). This phenomenon of permitting imperfect or erroneous statements of scientific fact or theory as a path towards more precise learning encapsulates the transition between the fantastic and realistic imagination, and is still debated among educators in science and mathematics, many of whom cite the need for students to spend inordinate amounts of time and energy unlearning their earlier errors. The mathematics educator John Allen Paulos (1992) calls it the tension between clarity and precision. The wild imagination is, indeed, a challenge to contain but, as King

and Brownell as well as Paulos maintain, the wildness may be understood and utilized as a path towards precision.

"I'll never teach children they came from monkeys," a university student preparing to become an elementary school teacher once blurted out in my class. We were discussing the invasion of creationism into the biology classroom. That student's imagination was indeed wild! For me the need was to tame it; to let it be, yet redirect it towards precision. "Who says children came from monkeys," I asked. "Evolution says that," she replied. "Well, how do monkeys differ from apes?" I asked, "Do apes have tails? Can monkeys swing on branches?" and on it went. The point is that, even at the age of twenty, this woman had an image of herself and of the rest of the living world that was fundamentally at odds with the discourse of the community of biology since Darwin. The vast terrain of her ignorance was not going to be traversed in one class or one course. She needed to speak from her imagination or nothing would be accomplished and, sadly perhaps, nothing was. But the point is that the discourse of students never matches the precision of well-made texts, but what is too often forgotten is that the well-made texts emerged out of discourse that was also imprecise and often wild.

But the university student's comment betrays yet another problem pointed out by linguists (Gee 2004). To be invited into the linguistic community of science means that students must choose to take or avoid the risk of leaving the common-sense community of discourse they are accustomed to among their family and friends. This fear is most dramatically experienced by racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, but also by children from families of the working poor and the unemployed. It is again the beauty of the conversation, of the drama of real discourse that must draw such students to choose scientific literacy. So it seems the work of Dewey, Bruner, Schwab, King, and Brownell remain relevant today, for each of these educators was committed to the idea that the beauty of student-to-student and student-to-teacher discourse was what attracted students to join in the learning process and what moved students forward to reconstruct their imperfect knowledge.

The Role of Science Writers

Writers who grasp that students and ordinary people come from commonsense discourse into the discourse community of science and mathematics abound. These include writers like Paulos, whose works *Innumeracy* (1988) and *Beyond numeracy* (1992) value clarity first and move to precision later. One way for science teachers and curriculum workers to support their work of engaging students in the conversation is to read these writers and work with their material in their classes. Some of these are much more suitable than others, but even the more questionable ones like Michael Guillen, whose book *Five equations that changed the world* (1995) has been criticized for mixing fiction with fact and for having mathematical errors, can provide grist for the mill in the hands of a knowledgeable teacher.

But of course, it is better for teachers and curriculum workers to focus their energies on the most effective of these science writers, such as Alan Lightman in the physical sciences and Stephen Jay Gould in the biological sciences. Gould was, and Lightman is, quite at ease with the notion of the beauty of science, and the writing of both men exudes the notion that part of that beauty is the drama of the conversation, and even at times the tragic consequences of scientific work and scientific discovery. Lightman's essay on Edward Teller in *A sense of the mysterious* (2005) is quite poignant in this regard.

Lightman and Gould are by no means the only science writers who could benefit teachers and curriculum workers, and this chapter does not aim at making a list of such writers, but some of the most fruitful ones would include Bulent Atalay, Rachel Carson, Keay Davidson, Timothy Ferris, Rebecca Goldstein, Brian Greene, Dava Sobel, Brian Swimme, and Lewis Thomas. Also, materials contained in *Project 2061* of the American Association for the Advancement of Science are rich sources for this kind of background work. In addition there is a vast literature of biographies of mathematicians and scientists that is quite useful.

Imaginative and Precise Presentation

In the conversation and drama of science education students and teachers both are required to present. One starting place for many students is a science journal that the teacher reads but does not grade. Writing regularly in a science journal has been shown to help students begin to learn the language of the science classroom (Hanrahan 1999, cited in Thompson 2006). A science writing heuristic (SWH) has been developed to help students move beyond journal-type entries to more precise scientific writing (Hohenshell 2006, cited in Thompson 2006) for presentations. These journal-writing and presentation-writing activities support both classroom conversation and growth in the precision required for visual presentations.

The more students can be moved from the personal to the precise writing of scientific data, the more ready they are to learn to create and consume graphic visualizations of data. Edward Tufte (2006) reports that 25 per cent of the material in all articles in scientific journals is reported visually. This means that the realistic imagination is at work at least 25 per cent of the time in these articles, and that students of science need to learn how such visualizations are made, how to read them, and how to critique them. In *Beautiful evidence* (2006) Tufte lays out the principles for making and reading visual displays of evidence.

He tells the story of Louis Gerstner, who, when he became president of IBM, was at a meeting in which a presenter was using the overhead projector for a briefing on the mainframe computer business. As the presenter was preparing the second slide, Gerstner walked up and turned off the projector. In the silence that followed, Gerstner said to the assembled managers, "Let's just talk about your business." Visuals need careful attention, and ought not be handled ritualistically. Tufte's six principles are:

1. Comparisons, contrasts, and differences must be shown. Visuals are mainly analyses of relationships, larger, smaller, weaker, stronger: the "than what" must be shown in the graphic.
2. Causality, mechanism, explanation, systematic structure must be shown. The comparisons call out for some explanation that must be seen.
3. Multivariate data must be shown. Normally one simple cause and effect relationship is insufficient for displaying complex data, and must be shown. This demonstrates critical analysis on the part of both students and teacher.
4. All the words, numbers, and diagrams of the graphic must be integrated. Normally text must be added to the graphic display to tell the viewer what is going on.
5. The evidence must be thoroughly described, and a detailed title along with authors and sponsors and documentation of data sources must appear along with complete measurement scales and relevant issues.
6. The content of the graphic must be relevant, and of high quality and integrity.

The point of the Gerstner story is that PowerPoint presentations normally miss on one or all of these principles, and because they by nature move from one frame to another, they make it impossible for the viewer to put the whole message of the visual together. In addition, making careful graphics according to these principles makes meaningful demands on the realistic imagination of both teacher and students, and enables them to converse about the adequacy of the visual, make necessary changes, and learn more deeply the material they are accountable for.

Conclusion

Using the insights of imagination and mythopoesis makes it more likely that teachers of science and mathematics will engage whole communities of learners in appreciating and seeking the beauty that underlies these disciplines. Grounded in story-telling, mythopoetic pedagogy strikes awe in the hearts of new learners and establishes the domain upon which they are focused. It shows how reasoning is done within that domain and informs the community of the consequences of the scientific work that has been and is being done. It tells the life stories of scientists and mathematicians, and tells both of the greatness and the limitations of their findings. Through engaging students in experiments, conversations, and visual presentations it challenges them to imagine the real, to illustrate their understandings, to critique each other's work, to participate in a drama that is simply beautiful.

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Chapter 7
The Mythopoetic Body: Learning Through Creativity

David Wright

Abstract The learning experience can be identified and studied through considerations upon processes of participation. The interlocking notions of autopoiesis and mythopoesis can be used to help understand and articulate that participation. These notions illuminate embodied experience, reflective consciousness, and the construction of cultural knowledge forms or stories. This chapter reflects upon the use of creative arts practices to assist educators to gain insight into the practical application of creativity. It presents research done with a group of beginning and pre-service teachers in a series of workshops focused on creative practice. Through workshop evidence and associated theory it discusses ways in which creativity facilitates the emergence of learning and ways in which that learning permeates life and constructs further opportunities and experiences. It looks to embodiment as a major determinant in the process and discusses such things as improvisation, reflection, collaboration, and emergence and their role in the dynamics of learning.

First Contact

My first contact with the term "poiesis" (also termed "poesis") came through my introduction to the term "autopoiesis," as conceived by systems theorist Humberto Maturana. According to Maturana, autopoiesis "means *self-creation* and consists of the Greek words *auto* (self) and *poiein* (produce, create)" (Maturana and Poerksen 2004, p. 97). He explains:

> Living systems produce themselves from within their closed dynamics. They share the autopoietic organisation in the molecular domain. When we examine a living system, we find a network producing molecules that interact with each other in such a way as to produce molecules that, in turn, produce the network producing molecules, and determine its boundary. Such a network I call autopoietic … It produces itself. (Maturana and Poerksen 2004, pp. 97–98).

Maturana uses the term to refer to a meta-analysis of biological process with significant implications for pre-existing notions of relationships on a molecular level.

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In this respect, Maturana argues that those who seek to apply it beyond biology misrepresent the concept. For the concept has been used in a variety of fields, from psychotherapy, ecology, spirituality, ethics, and education to the broad social sciences. Niklas Luhmann (1995), for example, has sought to construct an understanding of social communication through Maturana's work on structure-determined systems. This work founders, according to Maturana, on the argument that molecular systems are independent living entities while communication systems are not. Fritjof Capra (2002), by contrast, applies the understanding to a systemic or "Gaian" reading of the universe. From this he offers analyses of ecology, spirituality, and learning. Maturana however is keen to extract mythic resonance from his conception. He argues that the term is not intended as a metaphor, asserting that "using a concept outside its proper context of application means committing a double fault: the concept will work properly neither in the original nor the new domain" (Maturana and Poerksen 2004, p. 106). I do not find it as easy to extract the mythic. In my memory of my meeting with the concept there is mythos in abundance. For example, I can tell of myself at the time, an uncertain Ph.D. student embarking on an all-embracing journey of learning; of an Iranian student of agriculture (now rumoured to be highly influential among the mullahs), who first talked with me about autopoiesis; of my Indigenous Australian academic supervisor who was fond of linking integral consciousness, ritual and ceremony, and biological unfolding; of my self-effacing academic mentor—a great talker—who enriched my understanding of autopoiesis with stories told through the lens of Jungian psychology and, not the least, I can talk of a mercurial goblin from Chile (Maturana himself) who, in 1994, addressed a small gathering in a religious retreat on the fringe of Sydney, Australia. He began his talk with a detailed analysis of molecular systems and concluded four days later with a systemic analysis of "love."

> Love consists in opening a space of existence for another in coexistence with oneself in a particular domain of interactions. As such love is an expression of a spontaneous biological congruence and has no rational justification: love takes place because it takes place and lasts as long as it lasts. Also love is always at first sight, even when it appears after circumstances of existential constraints that force recurrent interactions; and this is so because it takes place only when there is an encounter in structural congruence, and not before. Finally, love is the source of human socialization, not a result of it, and anything that destroys love, anything that destroys the structural congruence that it entails, destroys socialization. Socialization is the result of operation in love, and takes place only in the domain where love takes place. (Maturana 1985, pp. 129–131)

My encounter with the concepts of autopoiesis was and is an extremely powerful encounter with the imaginal. It is an encounter that has allowed me to find myself within "our" culture through reference to "my" participation in a biological system that is interpreted by consciousness: to find, validate, and articulate "my story." Through this I bring ideas, embodied feelings, and articulated emotions into a research environment and initiate discussions upon encounters I have participated in: not the least my participation in encounters of learning, performance, and transformation. These have been for me what Patrick Harpur (2002) would call "soulful"

encounters. “Without soul,” says Harpur, “without imagination and its daimons, the world is laid waste” (Harpur 2002, p. 284).

Imagination

In *The philosophers’ secret fire*, Harpur’s “history of the imagination,” (2002) the author tracks a path through traditional social ritual, Neoplatonic thought, romanticism, and archetypal theory to construct an analysis of imagination in terms of its relationship to an “otherworld.” Fired by his determination I feel drawn to construct my relationship to autopoiesis also as a relationship to an otherworld—a world of the imagination—mediated by systemic relationships within which consciousness is prime. In a fictional context novelist Janette Turner Hospital (2003) describes this “otherworld” as a means of managing under pressure. Accordingly, she imagines the following advice to the vulnerable: “When in extremis, close eyes, open mind, step out into the uncharted abysses of your own memory and imagination, open parachute, create a floating world, explore its tunnels and byways, stay there until the All Clear signal sounds” (Hospital 2003, p. 262). This is, Hospital says, an environment inhabited and represented by creative artists. In comparison to this environment, Robertson Davies (1999) writes, quoting Bertrand Russell, “Intellect, except at white heat, is apt to be trivial” (Davies 1999, p. 337). Harpur’s “otherworld” is a broader concept. It is the basis of human meaning. His description suggests it is the container of what we are discussing here as the “mythopoetic universe.” Peter Willis describes mythopoesis as the process whereby “the reflective imagination is actively evoked and personal and social myths brought forth” (Willis and Carden 2004, p. 1). Harpur offers a similar understanding. He argues:

> Analogical “thinking” is the way in which imagination chooses to structure itself. It is also the fundamental characteristic of imagination’s primary products: myths. By understanding something of how myths work, and according to what rules, we shall understand better how imagination works and therefore what the human soul is like. (Harpur 2002, p. 69)

But social myths are of little relevance if no personal resonance arises. Without resonance the myth becomes an identity attached by an alien other. It is not shared understanding, of the kind that may be encountered in an experiential otherworld. This understanding is felt, and is discussed in terms of feelings: as such it is an embodied encounter. It is sensual and it is known, at least initially, through embodiment and sensuality. It is therefore an integral part of the self-creation that mythos facilitates. It is not an intellectual exercise nor is it a literal encounter. This is the basis of its transformative quality. It is pre-logical and it is known through a set of structural relationships akin to those through which Maturana accesses love.

If we know this much about the encounter and what facilitates it, it would seem that the means whereby the encounter can be generated would be worth knowing more about. It is not enough to identify it as a special resource of the creative.

Of greater benefit might be considerations upon ways and means of generating it and the consciousness that emerges as a consequence of it.

Improvisation

For many years I have worked in drama and theater: initially as a writer, then an actor, teacher, researcher, and tertiary educator. Throughout I have been fascinated by "improvisation." Author and musician Stephen Nachmanovitch says "we are all improvisers … Every conversation is a form of jazz. The activity of instantaneous creation is as ordinary to us as breathing" (Nachmanovitch 1990, p. 17). Yet improvisation is also bound by context. In the context of theater Frost and Yarrow (1990) identify improvisation as the heart of the art form. They describe it as a physical response, immediate and organic, and close to pure creativity.

Where improvisation is most effective, most spontaneous, least "blocked" by taboo, habit, or shyness, it comes close to a condition of integration with the environment or context. And consequently (simultaneously) it expresses that context in the most appropriate shape, making it recognisable to others, "realizing" it as act (Frost and Yarrow 1990, p. 2).

"Self-consciousness" is important within improvisation. In my experience the self can be illuminated by the learning in the process. This understanding is at the heart of the work of Augusto Boal (1992). Boal is both activist and educator. He describes theater as "the art of looking at ourselves" (Boal 1992, p. xxx). He argues that "all human beings are actors (they act!) and spectators (they observe)" and offers the term "spect-actors" to denote those who observe themselves in the process of participation in socio-cultural relationships. This is akin to the self (autopoietic) observation of personal participation in the social construction of mythos (mythopoesis).

Working with Boal's assertion that "theatre is a form of knowledge" and "a means of transforming society" and his argument that it "can help us build our future rather than just waiting for it" (Boal 1992, p. xxxi), it is worth considering some of the means whereby the self can find itself in mythos through structured exercises in improvisation.

"Yes"

Frost and Yarrow (1990) cite Keith Johnstone on the central rule of improvisation.

> There are people who prefer to say "Yes", and there are people who prefer to say "No". Those who say "Yes" are rewarded by the adventures they have, and those who say "No" are rewarded by the safety they attain. There are far more "No" sayers around than there are "Yes" sayers, but you can train one type to behave like the other. (Frost and Yarrow 1990, p. 1).

Johnstone argues therefore that the dynamics of improvisation are accessed by answering "Yes." Thus the first exercise in any practical pedagogy through improvisation should draw attention to the social and organizational dynamics of "Yes" and "No." This can be extended by subtle variations upon the theme. For example, the dynamics of "Yes and" differ from those of "Yes but." This can be demonstrated in action and experienced through participation in a workshop setting. Initially this knowledge is embodied—it arises through immersion in the experience—later it is subject to reflection and cognition.

There are numerous exercises that build on agreements arising as a consequence of "Yes." Some of these have been systematised within improvisation games of the kind played in theater sports. Originally devised and/or collated by Keith Johnstone (1981), these games have been placed in an Australian context by Lyn Pierse (1993). Pierse postulates seven stages in the process of improvisation. In my opinion these can be reduced to a core three: "Offer," "Accept," and "Extend." An offer must be made, the offer must be accepted, and this acceptance must be extended such that another offer is made. The spontaneous processes of improvisation then unfold. (This truly needs to be experienced in an interactive workshop setting.) It is important that at key points in the workshop process time is set aside for reflection. Participants need to be invited to form and articulate their understanding of that in which they are participating. Herein lies the opportunity for embodied consciousness to be cognized. Once this "body of knowledge" is engaged the work can be expanded further.

It is in this overlay of biology and culture that autopoiesis and mythopoesis come together to form consciousness: to determine a body of knowledge. The argument around improvisation and pedagogy is constructed from this base. There are an abundance of exercises that have been devised and/or documented by Boal, Johnstone, Pierse, and others. Once the learning behind the process is appreciated it is possible to devise, improvise, and play further. I find myself doing this frequently in my own teaching, not as a means of playing games, but as a means of extending the consciousness implicit in the process of generating intuitive, embodied learning. This is central to the practice of many educators with a background in creative practice. Not all educators have this background however. Recognition of this prompted a 2004 research project. The project was given the title "Enhanced creative practices for beginning teachers" and was designed to test the efficacy of an intensive program in creative pedagogies, working with principles such as those discussed above, for final year education students and beginning teachers.

The research comprised a series of intensive workshops that included a range of approaches to learning drawn from theater and improvisation; process drama; visual arts; and somatics and well-being practices. The workshops were complemented by focus group discussions, participant journals, and pre- and post-workshop surveys.

One of the most interesting insights to emerge from the research was the way in which learning emerged in the form of mythic narratives during and as a consequence of the workshops. These narratives were employed to provide both context and rationale for the learning identified in the research process.

It became clear to both the researchers and the participants that in educational settings creative arts practices need to be constructed around pedagogical relationships as much as arts practices. Furthermore, learning about pedagogical relationships that employ creative arts practices revolves around stories of social practice because central to their effectiveness is a relationship to new and emerging insights. Because they are not built around static or re-generated understandings, new and emerging insights require experiential modeling and are only successful when communicated with respect for others' imagination and creativity. This is an understanding that can only be learned through experience. This learning forms the basis of mythos and is socialized via community. Central to this research therefore were the narratives of the student and teacher participants. It is in these that evidence can be found for the bio-cultural process of autopoiesis via mythopoesis.

The Research

In the research four staff from the University of Western Sydney, David Wright, Mary Mooney, Catherine Camden-Pratt, and Neil Davidson, guided a group of sixteen pre-service and beginning teachers through a semester of varied experiential and creative workshops. The research was designed to examine a variety of issues. These included:

- How creativity and imagination are constructed by pre-service and beginning teachers
- How specific creative and imaginative practices can be used to enhance pedagogical outcomes for pre-service and beginning teachers
- How beginning teachers use creative and imaginative practices as they progress in their professional lives
- How a language based on creative arts experiences enables reflective pedagogical practices
- How reflective pedagogical practices may be applied within a teacher education course structure

The project sought to validate and provoke reflection on personal experiences of creativity. In search of a definition of "creativity," we turned to biologist Rupert Sheldrake. Seeking a definition through biology, rather than cultural theory, ensured issues of embodiment and the associated experience of "embodied learning" came to the fore. Sheldrake says:

> I think creativity seems to involve a process like the welling up or boiling up of new forms in an incredible diversity. New forms are conditioned by memories of what has gone before and by existing habits, but they are new syntheses, new patterns. (Sheldrake et al. 2001, p. 13)

It is important to note that, while many of the activities employed in the creative workshops as part of the research are drawn from practices used in "drama," "visual

arts," "creative writing," and others, the function of the workshops was not to teach the art forms of drama or visual arts or creative writing but to alert the teacher/participants to the learning inherent in such activities. The sessions were designed therefore as models of learning and the role of the workshop facilitators was to model the facilitation or leadership of the learning. This modeling would be meaningless however if the participants were unable to "learn" through their participation (and we leave the quality and the parameters of that learning to be described by the participants). Beyond this, it was the role of the workshop facilitators to use their own experience to assist in the further articulation of that learning. In this respect learning was not delivered. Participants in the workshop were invited to make their own meaning and to articulate their own understandings of that meaning, in terms of learning. Those articulations provide the substance of the inquiry.

Most activities required participants to work collaboratively. The encouragement of a group ethos, a participatory ethic, was central to cultivating the context for personal and creative agency. Looking back, it is arguable that this was one of the major accomplishments of the project. One of the group members, we will call her Jane, affirmed this in her journal: "You feel comfortable, you want to join in … you want to add to things, you want to join in and its good fun, cause you know at least it's a safe environment."

Group relationships were prioritized because of the importance of shared experiences and shared understandings in mythopoesis. The development of such understandings requires first and foremost a preparedness to work in a socially engaged manner, then an ongoing ability to do so: to be open, honest, and trusting (until reason arises not to be) in a workshop environment. Without qualities of this kind—for such qualities underpin effective social communication—the work to build a group ethos fails. These qualities enable participants to work with a consciousness of their participation: both participate in and observe the process. Augusto Boal (2002) suggests this duality in his term "spect-actor." The work of Boal had significant influence on the research. Elsewhere, N. Katherine Hayles (1999) describes this duality as a process wherein each individual becomes a participant in an epistemology of "emergence": they come to know through their part in things. Just as our definition of creativity is drawn from a scientific base, this use of "emergence" also has its origins in science. It has been used in systems theory and cybernetics and is applied here, by Hayles, to the study of social systems.

> Emergence implies that properties or programs appear on their own, often developing in ways not anticipated by the person who created the simulation. Structures that lead to emergence typically involve complex feedback loops in which the outputs of the system are repeatedly fed back as input. As the recursive looping continues, small deviations can quickly become magnified, leading to complex interactions and unpredictable evolutions associated with the emergence. (Hayles 1999, p. 225)

Mythopoesis is a consequence of "emergence" of this kind. Like the "emergent," the structure of mythopoesis is such that it cannot be anticipated or known in full beforehand. Furthermore, it cannot be generated simply because it is (or is assumed to be) known. It is created and it arises in the complex feedback systems that comprise communication. It is a consequence of recursive processes of action and

reflection and is inherently social. It changes people's lives because it creates new relationships and as a result creates new knowledge systems and new ways of being in the world. It constructs mythos.

Research Methods

During and following the workshops data was gathered through a variety of methods. The most important method was through the processes that comprised the workshop sessions. This part of the research cannot be emphasised enough. It is through the activity of participating that understanding was generated, and then made available. The "evidence" becomes therefore, in part, a consequence that is reported by participants themselves, documented, and made available to the researchers through questionnaires, focus group discussions, journals, and facilitated discussion within workshops.

The workshops were structured around a variety of activities. The first session comprised descriptions of the research project, introductions to and within the group followed by an opportunity for individuals to talk to and hear from each other via an exercise in collage making. This was the start of the story-telling. The collage activity allowed participants to gain a feeling for the opportunities latent within the project. As well as signifying the start of the research, it also signified the start of the community building.

Sally recorded her thoughts on the collage process in her journal:

> Being in the workshop today really made me focus on myself, my feelings and thought, my learning and my present level of creativity. There hasn't been any other subject that allowed me to focus on myself. I really enjoyed the first workshop. It was relaxing yet it made me really look into my thoughts and think. I loved the exercise of the collage. My focus question was: How can I build on my creativity in the future? I also believe that conducting the task in silence was the best way to go about it. In this way my thoughts were focused entirely on my question. I know I will find this research project beneficial because previous to doing this I always believed that I had no creative ideas and nothing to bring to the classroom.

The second workshop sought to document participants' thoughts on creativity further. Each was asked to write responses to the following questions.

1. What does it feel like, this creativity?
2. What does it do, this creativity?
3. How do you see it, this creativity, in others?

In response to Question 1, Jennifer wrote: "It makes your mind wander, it surprises you … it takes you to a place you don't visit very often." Sally wrote: "If you think you are creative you feel that life is easier, the sky is bluer, you just feel good." Donna wrote: "It feels enlightening and exhilarating because you feel a lot smarter than you thought you ever were … It takes stamina and freedom of thought." Megan wrote: "Creativity feels different for everyone and can be ever changing.

It doesn't and shouldn't ever always feel the same." Sharon wrote: "Sometimes … I surprise myself and the creativity feels great." Tom wrote: "Creativity is a feeling of excitement, concern and personal pride in achieving your aims."

In response to Question 2, Ling wrote: "It helps to change your way of thinking, to be more adaptable to various situations." Sally wrote: "You hope to live up to the standard again. It gives hope and confidence and makes you think you are capable of changing lives." Donna wrote: "[it can] open doors [to opportunity], [it] motivates." Charlotte wrote: "Creativity can … allow for innovation, change, adaptation, improvement." Megan wrote: "Creativity … can give someone the will to live when there is none … it can bring people closer together." Sharon wrote: "It pushes you out of your comfort zone." Tom wrote: "Creativity allows me to release ideas, thoughts and actions to the world. It is an emotional, physical and mental expression of deep inner thoughts and ideas."

In response to Question 3, Jennifer wrote: "I see it through others' speech … you can often see wheels turning in the mind of others … if someone inspires me it is usually because they are creative at what they do." Donna wrote: "[you see] innovative ways of problem solving or presentation, [in the] arts, impromptu action-presenting styles, free speech." Megan wrote: "You can see creativity in the unlikeliest of places. In saying this it should also be noted that creativity in others is not always evident at first glance or at all. This is as the observer must be open to new ideas, thought and practice." Tom wrote: "Creativity can be expressed in many different forms. From the way a person dresses to the colour of their hair. I see creativity as an expression which can be channelled into any direction a person wishes to express it."

Clearly, the invitation to reflect allowed the participants to begin building stories of substance. The comments demonstrate clear recognition of benefits arising from creativity as well as some awareness of it as a social dynamic. But one of the most striking elements in these responses is the broadly held notion that creativity is an "add-on" or an "extra," something beyond the normal way of being and doing. This prompted the research further. One of the intentions of the work was to discover if creativity could be made more accessible: to see if it could become an identifiable part of the everyday practice of these beginning teachers. Through these quotations, and others like them, it seems that these people believe that creativity is not as available to them as they would like.

Workshop Sessions

"Improvisation" was an important part of the project. The activities that directly employed improvisation were introduced in workshop sessions 2, 3, and 8. Session 2 began with an introduction of "offer, accept, and extend" exercises. These exercises came to be emblematic within the overall process. They came to provide a language that was used to capture crucial understandings at various times.

The initial "offer, accept, extend" activities were short drama exercises used firstly as fun, secondly to induce participation in activities, and thirdly as offering

a key to understandings that underpin the initiation of effective relationships in the classroom (drama and elsewhere). Through these activities we were both teaching through experience and modeling a method: we were acting out our own assumptions and demonstrating the relevance and efficacy of the creative pedagogy we were working with and through. This is a social practice founded on respect for personal and emerging understandings. Central to it is the activity but of equal import is the language and learning through which understanding is communicated. The "offer, accept, and extend" drama activities we facilitated are relatively common and easily accessed. Most drama teachers use them in some way with every class they teach. Many non-drama teachers, especially primary school teachers, use them as well (without necessarily knowing their origins). The context we were working in however ensured that the activities were deployed, then interpreted and understood, in ways particular to this research. This is generally the way in process drama.

Because so many activities required improvisation, it came to be seen as much more than a workshop activity. It emerged as an essential ingredient within the critical and transformative practices of the research. It is because of this that we assert that an experiential understanding of improvisation is crucial to working creatively because creative work is never a simple reiteration of existing knowledge. It requires a capacity to respond to and trust personal spontaneity.

Our first exercise in practical creative pedagogy through improvisation was used to draw attention to the social and organisational dynamics of "yes" and "no." This was then extended by subtle variations upon the theme: the dynamics of "yes and," "yes but," and "no" (as discussed earlier). This ensured that reflection became a major contributor to the learning. Central to reflection—and its associated learning—is an awareness of contextual dynamics and a capacity to negotiate these empathically (Arnold 2004). Reflection, context, and a sense of participation are essential ingredients in the construction of meaning. This involves considerably more than story telling.

Much can therefore be drawn from the feedback that was gathered in and through these activities. In the evidence that was gathered the "offer, accept, extend" sequence was frequently cited as an important learning tool, and not only in relation to teaching practices.

> *Jane said:* Like, with my partner Michael I think I'm saying "no" a lot, but I have to say "yes, but" … "yes but, maybe what if this happens". That's what I was seeing in schools, good teachers were not saying "no" to kids saying "yeah but" … "yeah but what about this", or giving them a direction … giving them a choice … Yes that hit me: the importance of saying "yeah but, what about this."
>
> With the games and things we've played and discussed … I might have heard of the game before, but in THIS context, without realising that in teaching you could do THIS with it … You can do a lot more with the game than what it was originally presented to you as. It seems fantastic because even if you've used "offer" and "accept" and "extend" before, [now I] realise there's a lot of places I can go with these things that I wouldn't have thought of before.

> *Kathy said:* I don't ever recall you guys ever saying "No," oh we might have completely gone off the track but it's like you kind of back us and you give us other opportunities or

other ideas to try and lead back to the spot where you are intending to go to. That has taught us a skill … instead of saying "No," how about you kind of suggest other things to do and try a different approach, to get them back on track because "No" can be heartbreaking to kids.

Deirdre said: The last time we were doing the games the offer, accept, and extend. I got a jolt from that because remember, David, you'd say to us, "I don't want you to say 'What are you doing?' Name the action that you are seeing when you come into the game." I think I said "What are you doing?" 45 times and I'm hitting myself on the back of the head saying "Don't say it." What I got out of that, thinking about teaching … what about the child who's doing constantly the thing you're telling them not to do … and I actually saw that when I was doing practice teaching and it made me realise … Here's me saying, "What are you doing" and David's saying "I don't want you to say 'What are you doing,' say 'oh, why are you baking a pie' " (i.e. name the action). That kind of thing and out on prac Deirdre goes, "what are you doing, what are you doing?" I just … Oh I feel there are people out there that do that all the time: children especially. I think they're unaware, I think I've got to take that on board and go with it and it's one thing I got out of the exercise … that hit me, you know.

Forum Theater

Another set of improvisation activities, revolving around Augusto Boal's forum theater, were also used in the process. Forum theater is an activity that requires high levels of personal interaction, trust, and communication. The process used in this workshop is derived from one written about and modeled by Boal. Boal worked with Paulo Freire in his literacy campaigns. (Boal described his approach as "Theatre of the Oppressed", acknowledging Freire.) Like Freire, Boal sought to educate to empower. His theater is an emancipatory tool, not an aesthetic construction. Central to its use is more effective participation in political processes (and here "political" refers directly to the capacity to participate in, and not be overwhelmed by, the power systems that rule society).

Boal describes the methodology of forum theater in his book *Games for actors and non-actors* (1992). Rather than reiterating that description it might be more appropriate to introduce the activity through the words of one of the workshop participants (with some clarification added).

Brenda: As a group we had to dramatize this [a scenario derived from a personal story of oppression] to show the rest of the group. With the other groups we had to look at the oppressed people in the situation. [We found it possible to do this on] many levels then [we were asked to physically step into the drama and] change the scenario by being one of the characters [in the story].

The aim here is for the spectator to encounter the dynamics of participation (as an actor): hence Boal's term "spect-actor." The activity generates a dramatic embodied consciousness, as distinct from an intellectual consciousness, of the dynamics of oppression. Participation in a drama of this sort constructs a form of direct engagement that observation does not. Those in the research group who allowed themselves to risk direct engagement learned a considerable amount.

> *Brenda continued:* It really made me think of how situations can be dealt with in so many ways and how people see what they want to see. For example in [one of the dramatized encounters] the classroom scenario, with the defiant child who didn't want to dance … many teachers would think the child was just being stubborn. When in fact [we discovered that] the child wanted help and a bit of attention from the teacher. The teacher ignoring the child was not a good way to deal with this situation and it made me think that I never want to be a teacher who ignores students. I learnt that I need to look into the child's mind before making decisions, not just rely on what I think I see.

The participants seemed to respond to this drama workshop enthusiastically: it generated considerable discussion in and around the actual event. However, not a lot was recorded in journals or raised in interviews and focus groups about this part of the process. Certainly, compared to the improvisations using "offer, accept, extend," the forum theater session seems to have been less important to this group. Reasons for this are suggested in the following journal entry. It reminds us that despite the community-building aspect of the workshop participants retained reservations and approached the workshops with a low level of experience in work of this kind. It reminds us also that there is a limit to what can be accomplished in a short time and that those who took part in the process did so as beginning teachers, not as drama students or people whose priorities were social change and/or personal development.

Sally wrote in her journal: "I feel intimidated by drama activities with speech because I feel you can never be confident in what you say and your uncertainty comes out in your performance. You become consumed with nervousness and trying not to make a fool of yourself." These activities do not suit everyone.

General Observations

Despite this reservation, all those who took part in the workshops expressed general enthusiasm for the experience and their part in it. The following have been selected for their relevance to issues discussed above.

> *Amanda*: I really like the idea that we all did something … That we all ACCEPTED and we all EXTENDED on what we had. We're pooling our resources.

> *Lyn*: I found … before I started coming to these workshops, there was one way. I felt like my life was very directed in one way, but when I came here and communicated with everyone else and heard their ideas and their ways of thinking, I found there was more that I could offer. In a way, I have different paths going off my tree, with more branches and that kind of thing.

> *Elsa*: I've had a lot of trouble with uni, getting into subjects that I wanted to do, and I'm doing no subjects that I like, but I find with this, I feel it has really helped me, in the classroom … coming here … I felt comfortable with everyone … it's made me open up more.

To an extent this sort of response is to be expected. The low teacher–student ratio (4:16), the deliberate cultivation of community, the concentration on fun, the valuing of personal experience, the adaptability of staff and the open acceptance of differences among and between students contributed to an inclusive and diverse learning

environment. It was an ideal teaching environment, one within which learning could be valued then examined in a thoughtful and imaginative way. (If only all learning could be like this.) From one perspective, we were offering a model of teaching that was deliberately provocative: it was challenging that with which these students were most familiar. From another we were offering a model of teaching that was open, communicative, and effective. It was from this second perspective that most of the workshop participants chose to view the research, according to the feedback that we gathered. However, many used the invitation to comment on the workshop as an opportunity to critique their teacher education course.

> *Hanna*: A reason why I think these workshops have worked so well is because we all chose to take part, but I really do think that to be able to bring more of this into teacher education courses would be beneficial. Like if we could do another session of the "profession of teaching" and be able to put a lot more thought into "what is it that is quality teaching," not just how you manage a classroom … There's so much classroom management and classroom discipline … And [I want to ask], what are other creative ways that we can go about this? [Why not more of] this sort of learning, this sort of sharing of ideas, this small group activity rather than being in a lecture hall [where] a lot of the time [information] is sort of force-fed to you. I think that [in] this sort of learning [in the workshop] the teacher needs to be interwoven more with the learning.
>
> *Amanda*: [In our course] everything is [too] structured, you're not allowed to think outside the square. You're told "this is what you think," "this is what you feel," and "this is what you should read," "this is what you should do."
>
> *Jane*: [This] is a very happy way to teach … you don't feel intimidated … I walk away from this going "Oh my goodness, it was so refreshing." I really do think that the academic side of things could learn more from the creative arts.
>
> *Jennifer*: I think like we've been here [in teacher training] 3 or 4 years and what we've learned is very structured, it's like okay different learning styles, if this one doesn't work try this one. In the last two months [in the research] it's been not too structured, not too formal, it's just like very informally trying different things rather than what the theory says or just trying what you think might work in teaching something to a student. It might be like okay that theory isn't working so just try something else that maybe you haven't researched and maybe you just thought of it as you would [if you were] teaching it.
>
> *Jennifer (again)*: I can't really give a specific example, I just know since starting the workshops it's been … I've loved it because it hasn't been based on theory and it's just been based on personal thoughts and emotions and I think a lot of that comes out in your teaching. I have [studied performing arts] at uni before and I know a lot of the theoretical side behind this work but this was such a different approach because we were allowed to give our personal thoughts on it.

While these responses are not strongly grounded or argued points of view they do suggest some problems with current models of pre-service teacher education that deserve consideration. Moreover they suggest that these early and pre-service teachers have begun to construct new mythologies around the process of teaching and the relationship between the teacher and learner.

> *Donna*: I actually thought that doing these workshops would make me more creative in the art form sense … Instead it has made me think outside the square and look at how I can make lessons for the student. To understand how students feel if placed outside their comfort zone. I have a better understanding of what stimulates creativity.

> *Jennifer:* I think by doing these creativity workshops … [I] can allow myself to be open and vulnerable and at the same time strong in that.

It is in the practical encounter with structural limits and structural opportunities that mythopoesis truly becomes a meaningful concept. It then raises awareness of the implications of a cultural reading of "autopoiesis." A sound appreciation of ways of knowing (through mythos) and the emergence of a bio-cultural form of participation in a living culture suggests the depth of awareness that comprises daily life. It invokes both awe and wonder in me. All that is required, at least initially, is a willingness to imagine and a desire to reflect upon and track the means, methods, and dynamics of that imagining.

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Chapter 8
Autobiography and Poetry

Peter Hilton

Abstract The central purpose of this discussion is to portray experiences that shape a teacher educator, inform curriculum development, and offer alternative modes of inquiry into teaching. The scholarship is derived from several complementary research traditions: autobiographical inquiry; story-telling and narrative inquiry; arts-based inquiry; teacher lore; and mythopoetic inquiry. The author recalls specific moments of teaching and learning, fictionalizes characters to protect their identity, and sketches, interprets, and analyzes these events to illustrate the complicated nature of curriculum inquiry. These experiences include middle school, high school, and college settings, and they include uses of poetry in teaching.

Introduction

This paper explores personal story as it opens into one teacher's approach to schooling. It tells my story, and my coming into poetry, and how that guided my own classroom curriculum. It provides some indications about how I use poetry as inquiry into the edges of the rational. Sometimes poetry allows me to explore feelings and experiences that other forms of research do not open to me. I hope this story speaks to what is unique about my teaching and yet connects to the stories of other teachers as they find their pathways.

Starting Out

It is likely that my dad's death relates to my poor reading ability throughout my younger years. Dad was the family reader, the one who produced manuscripts, the one for whom the rejection letters suggested a mismatch between his working vocabulary and their reading audience. When my mother fretted about her lack of education, his response was to buy her *The Harvard classics*. That she would read

T. Leonard, P. Willis (eds.), *Pedagogies of the Imagination,*

nothing beyond the demands of Christian Science under his directions spoke more to their dysfunction than to either's abilities.

Still, after dad's death, I could function in school, except for my outbursts of anger. My inability to read at eight was not an issue, but by sixth grade it had been diagnosed as dyslexia. I could listen and argue and even produce some horribly misspelled writing, but not read or garner information from text. I was strong with pictures and social skills at school, but books—even our copy of *The illustrated children's classics*—remained treasures that the beautiful illustrations could not unlock. Why writing worked, yet reading remained unavailable, was never explained to me, nor to my mother.

This academic disability opened some peculiar doors. By high school, I became aware of the levels of tracking (college bound, average worker, and manual laborers), efforts of special education teachers, and a path to poetry. Academic and intellectual testing could not completely exclude me from the college-bound track. That I was a white New Englander, not brown or Oklahoman, conflicted with the stereotypic placement in our "work-bound" track. Special education teachers kept some doors open and campaigned on my behalf.

My road out of illiteracy and into poetry opened ahead of me because of the remarkable Miss Dossee. I failed her Latin class in my first semester of high school. Latin was not something I could learn by asking others what they had read in the text or how they did their homework. Miss Dossee was a formidable 40, with striking red hair to match my own, and she terrified me. In the spring of my freshman year Miss Dossee had snagged me at the public library where she also had an office. She demanded I succumb to two tutoring sessions a week and said that my inability to read was an embarrassment to her and her high school. She knew my situation, and she took it as a personal challenge to change it.

One part of her method to teach me to read was conversation. We talked about California, her native state, and Connecticut, my native state. She had made some exceptional choices for a young woman growing up on one of the original old farms of Spanish California. She had a Ph.D. in Latin from Stanford University. After her father died, when she was twenty, she decided that educating herself would have made her father proud. She and her mother lived in the old hacienda of the rancho that was now without acreage, now that the Santa Clara valley had changed from agriculture to housing. Her passion for natural California was palpable. Later, long after her lessons, when I had finally gone on to college, San Jose State, I read *The destruction of California* (Dasmann 1965) because I could experience the confluence of two gifts Miss Dossee bestowed: reading and an intense identification with her troubled homeland.

Her other passion, for the English language, drove her back to school even after beginning her career as an over-qualified high school teacher. She took her second Ph.D. at Oxford University, England, where her subject was Middle English. She still returned to teaching at our high school near her family home, in a town she seemed to have loved from birth.

She brought stories about literature into her classroom. The monastery, whose bells woke most of the town for morning prayers, was the site of the opening scenes in Jack London's *The call of the wild* (1990). It had been a sister rancho to hers at

that time. Julius Caesar came into our high-ceilinged, darkened room for his 10:30 Latin class as he had for all the years Miss Dossee taught there. The door swung open mysteriously at his entry, daily. The characters from Charles Dickens haunted her room as well. We thought she might be Miss Haversham. Shakespeare breathed out of the woodwork! And one day, in anger, she shouted at me "do you know what happens when two redheads fight? Do you? The fight between Grendel and Beowulf will seem calm. No single stone will be left on top of another!"

Our tutoring sessions were her real gift to me. She brought out facts about my home life, particularly asking about our language habits in the home. We talked about my mother's singing, her church music, the popular songs she knew, and how she often sang in dialect: southern black, Scottish, Irish, German, and American. She asked if my dad had language talents, too. His most entertaining speeches came in a thick Scottish brogue, and he loved to read Robert Burns. Miss Dossee read a little of Burns in mimic of my remembered father. She did it in that familiar accent. She learned of my big collie, Laddie Boy, and his important place in my life, particularly after my relocation from my beloved Connecticut. She knew I had not wanted to move to California.

I remember the first evening she took me to a book, *Bob, son of battle* (Ollivant 1898) about a Scottish sheep dog, and written in dialect. She wanted me to remember the sound of my father's voice in dialect and try to read this book in that same voice. She read first, then me, in alternating paragraphs, but it was mighty slow going during my read because I could not see how the letters related to the sounds I should have made.

Miss Dossee pulled out of me many of the nursery rhymes I knew and then had me read them and some of her favorites, too. My mom knew many of the "transcendental poets" by heart. Miss Dossee read me a few I had heard my mother recite. She told me about poets, how they labored over word choice, how words could allude to so much more than a single literal meaning, how the ring of language rang differently for each poet, so you had to hear and feel their rhythm. Language, she said, caused the mind to expand outward, and by reading just a few words in a poem I could inspire deep and diverse thought. Become intimate with each word in a line of poetry was her message. Reading slowly, as I did, was just right for reading poetry, she said, but I would need to take time with a dictionary as well.

As she opened my world to poetry, she asked what I knew of Robert Frost. My mother, who had read poetry extensively in her high school, read me poems by him. My mom kept her interest in poetry and in things New England throughout her life. She had also gone to a community college for commercial art and had all the right sensibilities for an artist, she just lost herself in her religion as both refuge and inspiration. My godmother, a writer for the *New Yorker Magazine*, sent me a small book of his poems. We agreed that he was probably the most famous poet of our time, and since he wrote of my New England why not begin our poetry reading with him "and that has made all the difference."

Typical of her method was our approach to "The pasture" (Frost 1962). What is the narrator doing? Who is the *you* in the poem? Where does he ask *you* to go? What might he mean by "watch the water clear"? Why might he have included

"tongue" and "mother" in the same stanza? She read the contraction "shan't" and reminded me that Frost wanted the word to sound like the speech he heard in his New England. She established that I had been licked by a cow, visited many and various springs, and had raked piles of leaves and set them ablaze each autumn with my dad. She connected my personal experiences to those in the poem, and we brought the poem alive.

She took me through "Mending wall," "The road not taken," and "Stopping by woods on a snowy evening." All these were written before 1930, she told me, "but look how they speak to you. They speak to me, too, yet I grew up in California." Slowly I was wending my way into an intellectual life, even without much reading. She had me think about what happened in each poem. This was also an area, not strictly religious, that I could share with both my Christian Science mother and my Catholic teacher. I discovered, by asking, that some of my friends knew poems, too. This was reading that could become social. People in my world talked about poetry.

Miss Dossee convinced me that she believed I would learn to read and use my intellect. How powerful that faith of a teacher can be. She turned me around about reading. Much of my own teaching has been payback for what she gave me, or should I say "pay forward"? I look for students at risk and take them under my wing. I work with troubled readers. For a number of years my job at the university included developmental education, working with students who had arrived at the university without appropriate reading and writing skills. I have thought about Miss Dossee's methods often and hard.

Never did I talk to Miss Dossee about method. I did what she asked, both to avoid the Beowolf and Grendel scene and in the hopes of shortening my lessons. But what I experienced as transformative teaching reads to me, now, a good deal like Louise Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional theories of reading. It is altogether possible that Dossee had read Rosenblatt's earlier book, *Literature as exploration* (1938). Women intellectuals interested in the arts, literature, and in teaching may have been known to one another, or she may have known of this work. She did speak to me of John Dewey, so the connection is possible. Whatever the case, Miss Dossee taught me to read in a way that Rosenblatt refers to as "aesthetic reading," taking in the emotions and language, meaning and action, all at once. Finally, I could engage fully in reading, even though my skills were underdeveloped and my reading speed was on par with a third grader. This access to poetry would feed both my teaching and my research, again and again.

Guiding Literature Along the Pathway

My own poetic inclinations inclined me toward writing from the specific in hopes of illuminating the general. Under the tutelage of William Schubert and William Ayers, during my doctoral work at the University of Illinois, Chicago, and after reading *Teacher lore: learning from our own experiences* (Schubert

and Ayers 1999) and *Reflections from the heart of educational inquiry: understanding curriculum and teaching through the arts* (Willis and Schubert 2000) my faith in a personal stance, in the exposure of personal reasoning from lived experience, became stronger. Grumet (1980) has argued that truth can be found in the detail and intimacy of the transcribed event. Desalvo (1999) argues similarly that her memory creates a truth that matters, as she recalls the details of lived experience. We work to describe an event fully, and as completely as we can, and edge nearer to a truth that can be both healing and revealing. The telling forces consistency or the construct is out of kilter, a little like the work of psychoanalysis. It demands the events fit the history and character of the narrator.

Pinar and Grumet (1976), among others, have suggested we revisit the dynamics of our schooling and our practice so that we come to an informed understanding of the educational process and make that process conscious. Their *currere* is an ever-energizing look at the past to inform current and future practice. Van Manen (1990) and Haggerson (2000) consider the original text as the practical story of a lived experience to be examined for its multi-faceted content. For me the look backward informs my professional life. Current understandings allow fuller interpretations of earlier experiences. My limited reflections in no way reach the bounds of the possible, but they are the beginning of a practice that can be perpetually re-examined in light of new consciousness.

I begin with a carefully crafted, honest, story-like account of a lived experience. The experience was fundamental to my intellectual life. I step back from my engagement as a story-teller into my role as a curricularist. I examine the material for its educational content in a mythopoetic mode. Poetry is employed because, as Delese Wear (2000) suggests, it expands and exposes the least accessible areas of experience and does better than narrative in capturing the breadth of experience. I began with poetry as a way of knowing.

Experience Guides and Informs Teaching

"What did you do over summer vacation?" echoed from my past as I stood in front of the first group of the 135 students I would meet on opening day. I had been handed a two-inch, blue, three-ringed binder that was my curriculum guide. That, and the advice "to just connect writing to the units in the basal series." I do not think writing was a major concern for that principal. But I would not allow that historically dreaded assignment to take form on my lips.

Before this first day, I had thought through a number of "getting to know you" activities such as: interviewing and introducing the person sitting to your right, or telling your name and some word that describes you beginning with the same letter as your name, such as "pleasant Peter." As I entered the school that morning, a teammate pointed out that these kids, most of them anyway, had known each other since pre-school. Scrap getting-to-know-you activities, I thought. I was the only

outsider; the first new teacher in the school in seven years. Pissed Peter may have been more appropriate.

All my life I had stumbled over names, of family, close friends, or newly introduced people, so readily that my bride offered to get folks to wear name tags at our wedding, and later my daughter would rehearse my memory over the family albums prior to reunions. She said she did not want me to embarrass myself or her. How would I ever remember 135 names, 135 individual people?

These newly washed faces all shopped at the same stores, and based their identities on how much they looked like their peers. I gazed out at them and, in my mind, faced a sea of siblings. No plan had solidified.

In my previous setting as a federally funded teacher of remedial reading, I realized I remembered my students' stories, the case studies, better than their names. As a reading specialist, I searched their stories for what they already knew, and for what might have hindered their progress. Narratives, each child's story, stayed with me best.

So I began: "the aphorism about writing is that we write best what we know." Already my nervousness had shown itself in my choice of words. My nervous tendency to inflate my language would do me a disservice in this setting. I jumped ahead. "Tell me a story about yourself that will help me remember who you are." I continued on a list of things I did not want. "Don't tell me your favorite food, your best color, or your astrological sign (seventh grade?). Don't tell me the kind of bike you ride or your favorite TV shows. I want you to tell me an event in which the action gives some kind of clue about you." I asked them to tell me "something dramatic that had happened or is still happening and is on your mind, or something that involved your emotions like when you got mad or cried about something."

It was my first authentic assignment. It grew out of a need for me to know these kids. It was a piece of purposeful writing. I was the audience, but I allowed that kids could read their efforts to the class if they wanted. I had given no consideration to grading. Rubrics, back then, were still the words of the Lord written in red. Kids claimed they had nothing to write because nothing ever happened to them. By the time we talked through the assignment my 47 minutes were up.

This assignment was given before I read Donald Graves (1983) or Nancy Atwell (1987) on how to teach writing. For me it was before writing circles and authentic writing. These kids wrote about skateboards, bicycles, roller blades, fishing, exciting places, sporting successes, various and exotic pets, music and shows, and the peculiar members of their families.

One child, a child revisited in a poem later, told how he had been in America two weeks and had caught the bus to school in the morning, but a different bus—the wrong bus—in the afternoon. He thought a particular corner in Chicago looked familiar, so he got off. It was actually four miles from his home. He spoke only Tagalog, from the Philippines, and he walked for an hour, or more, at age 10, before he found a shop where they spoke his language. Finding such a shop was miraculous good luck. The shopkeeper called the police. His aunt, with whom he had come to live, had called the police, so sometime around eight at night he was finally reunited with his family. I remembered his story.

I had not anticipated invention. I asked the students to tell tales about themselves. Certainly, this did not preclude tall tales. Somehow I had not expected that approach. I had to check myself as I started to criticize for fabrication. Later, as I did the assignment yearly, I warned against describing anticipated suicide. "These stories force communication with parents and social workers," I said. But fantasy and imagination challenged my grounding and I never mentioned them. I never used such responses as examples, but I accepted them as meeting the criteria. I associated them with particular students. I remembered names, but I was never fully satisfied with these students' responses, nor with my reaction to them.

I found I had to steel myself for some of their stories. I knew I could not bring needy students home. Sometime early in my teaching I took a workshop on moral education at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Larry Nucci, the host professor, spoke about honoring those moments when someone lets you glimpse their soul. The image immediately connected to my regard for many of my students and their writings. When they told me of home and of life, I approached these stories with humility and empathy. My orientation became that toward hero stories. I may have been viewing survivor stories, though the themes were not work camps and wars, rather families and major relocations. Kids became immediately more human to me, and I could easily associate names with stories. Sometimes I could connect faces with names, newly washed, seventh grade, youthful faces. It is the stories that remain.

My earlier writing experiences with my seventh grade students have influenced my work with my college students. Variations of this original assignment still animate my classes. I also follow the lead of Bullough and Gitlin (2001) by asking my adult students to write about teaching and learning experiences to inform their own practice. Written descriptions of their current classrooms take them into a more reflective stance as they become students of their own teaching. I have students speak about previous learning experiences and listen to each other's stories. It is the individual stories that inform my own teaching and help me become a voice to address their teaching. I learn to know them in this way and that guides our mutual quest for a fuller understanding of the teaching moment.

Leonard (2000) developed a method of reflection through writing that helped expose the underlying philosophies that teacher candidates brought to his philosophy of education classes. I inherited some of his technique at Saint Xavier University, as I teach the "Teaching as a profession" course. By raising student consciousness about their own teaching and learning experience I have been successful in getting students to think and write cogently about their practice.

Poetry in Motion

I had been five years trying to perfect my poetry unit. It had been inspired by our reading specialist, who celebrated holistic learning, by asking each grade-level reading teacher to create a thematic unit of their own, but not repeating previous

grade-level efforts. By "perfecting" my unit I meant to have it reach the largest number of seventh graders possible. Not an easy bunch, these guys only wanted to read *Where the sidewalk ends* (Silverstein 1974), *The light in the attic* (Silverstein 1981) and other such amusing stuff already familiar to them from fourth and fifth grades. I hoped to widen their range of knowledge and taste without devaluing the known.

I read aloud some of my favorite poets. I read "Papa's waltz" by Reothke (1975) and "Road not taken" by Frost (1962) but I discovered my class had tin ears, or they thought the content dumb. A couple of students were offended by the line "the whiskey on his breath"; after all, this was the age of dare classes taught by "Officer Friendly" and sometimes reality rubbed against the ideal and created sparks. My classroom was a place where they could "just say no."

The first year I taught the unit, some girls brought in E.E. Cummings, but they slipped off into his more risqué poems. I felt obliged to slow them down, and I turned myself back into the nerdy teacher keeping the material "appropriate for school." This concept, the one of "safe material," rankled within my war veteran sensibilities. I brought in Bill Stafford's "Fifteen," about a boy who finds a motorcycle in the shrubs and imagines a great joyride before he locates the young man who had been thrown from the bike. I picked up a few listeners, but the poem was mighty gentle, as are most of Stafford's. Finally, when I introduced Charles Bukowski (1978) and his urban tough, my students moved beyond their conventional ideas of the content of poetry.

If I had known about poetry slams and non-academic poetry, or had a sense of the possibilities of the internet, only just beginning at that time, I might have been more adventurous. I could have accessed rap and punk and the mixture of music and words that flavor the edges of popular culture. Many of my students were enamored of that movement. My own lack of exposure limited our possibilities, and fear kept me laboring in the familiar. I know other teachers diminish the knowable world because of their own limitations, but I expected more of myself.

Getting the Students to Tell Me

Would my classroom have been more world-based if I had carefully crafted stories to teach my curriculum? Through stories I could have brought to the classroom the pleasures and magic of poetry I had experienced in workshops with William Stafford in Oregon in 1974 and in Illinois in 1982, or with Robert Bly in Chicago in 1984, or Charles Bukowski at Northwestern in 1977. Listening to a poet read and speak about his or her work changes all your understandings, putting more emphasis on intent.

At National Louis University I studied with renowned story-teller Betty Weeks. She allowed children to tell their own stories, once she had modeled. Her classrooms of small children were alive with the diversity of their worlds. Until I had read Kieran Egan (1986) I thought story-telling appropriate for small children only.

But Egan presents a cogent argument for teaching all curricula in story format. Schubert uses intellectual stories in his university classes to dramatize thinkers in the curriculum field (see Schubert 1986, 1996, 2003). Confronted by particular school situations, Schubert takes on the voices of various curricularists and reconstructs how they might speak to school dilemmas. Such story-telling leaves the world an unresolved, conflicted venue, one true to my understanding, in which the characters use their problem-solving strategies to create insights. That describes the poet's task, and the teacher's.

I used Bukowski to break out of the language of school, a language that can have devastating effects on student learning. Shirley Brice Heath's (1983) study focused on a greatly different environment from my suburban middle school. But how can the careful language of public school and the safe basal stories not put some kids to sleep? They are exposed to music videos with loosely constructed, fast-moving story lines. They watch the most graphic movies and television. The lyrics of graphic songs are repeatedly played to assure acquisition. My reading of Frost must have sounded like more of the same chatter many kids called "teacher talk." I was not brave enough, nor was I talented enough, to bring in the full richness of our native tongue. Where was Robin Williams when I needed him?

My poetry unit took shape when I took myself, with all my limitations, out of the center of things. I gave my students an open-ended invitation to determine content. I created three major tasks: select and memorize a poem for class recital; select and transcribe a poem to become part of our various classroom anthologies; finally, create an original poem on your own to be added to our class booklet of original poems.

Children copied, in longhand, a poem of choice. I asked them to try not to duplicate other classmates. Each poem collected by my students, all 135, were then photocopied 34 times. I allowed children to work in groups of four to organize these poems into anthologies. We had first examined professional anthologies and the library provided a cartload for classroom models. Each group of four read all the transcribed poems and then determined themes around which they could be organized. I actually heard kids seek out the collector and ask what the poem might mean. We spent a week reading and discussing these poems. Those students who worried about meanings then tried to relate one poem to another with colorful coversheets separating the different categories.

Students had another week to make section headings and illustrations and covers. If a poem appeared twice, they were to put one copy beneath another. Each year some poems would appear numerous times, as testimony to their popularity or their length. Some students created very elaborate anthologies and some did not even include all the poems. Certainly all the students encountered more poetry than they had in any other class.

I helped students find poems for both tasks, but many accepted the challenge. Some found poems to dedicate to their girl or boy friends. One girl used her dad's poems for both activities (and maybe for the last task, too). Two students in this first group copied song lyrics. They may have given permission to others, because as many as 30 children had copied lyrics the last time I did the activity. What excited

me was the variety: teen magazines, *Alice in Wonderland* (Carroll 1971), popular anthologies, parent favorites, all supplemented by poems from earlier grades and new explorations in the public and school libraries.

Some social pressure was exerted on kids who tried to slide. Some turned in a poem they had used in fourth or fifth grade but then faced jeers from their peers. Nursery rhymes brought severe interrogations from me to be certain they were not cop-outs. At the end of the unit many anthologies went home proudly. One group of kids went to the copy store, insisting each group member had to have their own copy of the anthology and that it be properly bound, not stapled, the way I provided.

The final task was an original composition. Everybody had to try, and those who wished could read their efforts to the class. These written poems were each copied 135 times so that every student had a copy of our original collection. We had a few cheaters who turned in borrowed work rather than original, but that generated wonderful conversation about fear and laziness. Overall, this anthology was cherished more aggressively than the earlier anthology. Later, siblings brought copies back during their time in Hilton's poetry circus, a name the kids gave the activity.

I have memories of intense group work, as students engaged in inquiry sessions in my classes. I remember a discussion when my students and I looked, together, at a poem brought in by one of them. It was simple, a boy on a fence on a farm at different times of day. It is not the poem that stays with me; rather it is the work of the whole class to gain understanding of the poem that is indelible on my mind. Something exciting happened as we used discussion and dictionaries to turn words to images and images to meaning. By the end of class, more than half of the students had constructed sufficient meaning to satisfy themselves that this was an excellent poem. Synergy happened. I learned about both the poem and group work that day; what happened within the group went beyond what we had planned, or could account for. Haggerson (2000) discussed this non-measurable energy as the spirit of the group. We created something in our room that had not been there at the outset. I wrote a poem in an attempt to depict this energy.

Bring in the warrior
In the circle of the room
A subject came alive
Like the ghost of an enchanted warrior
Kindling eyes of each participant
And bringing his tales of glory
To full fruition and splendour.
An imagined campfire
Defined our shape and energy
And brought him
Dancing and talking
In and around the smoke
His word-woven tale
Evoked a truth in us.

P. Hilton, July 2004

By 1992 we had been delivered from this wild and chaotic time of long weekend planning sessions and teachers scrambling for new and interesting materials. We abruptly

returned to textbook-driven instruction. The call for system-wide, articulated curriculum shut down my circus. Board members, encouraged by the business roundtable, demanded oversight and accountability. How could they know that every child would get the same quality of instruction if the instruction was not the same across the grade levels? Our units were only individual flights of fancy, reflecting teacher whim rather than scientifically driven best practice. Even student-selected silent reading did not provide an orchestrated challenge to the child unless teachers had control of the reading lists and could compel children up the spiral of ascending skills. California offered leveled books, cleared by their censors, and available to prescribe to our children. The board encouraged our adoption of the same lists, which did not even include Midwestern writers who often visited our school or library. Could I articulate the skills each child would successfully accomplish by participating in my poetry unit? I could only say that our children read more poetry than they might otherwise, and that some engaged in the activity with great enthusiasm. However, poetry, and its idiosyncratic content, was not part of the desired and tested outcomes of this new standardized curriculum.

I found Thomas Moore's *The re-enchantment of everyday life* (1996) disturbing about this point. Much of the magic had been stripped from daily activity. Students' unfettered learning, motivated by joy, had been excluded. I missed the long, slow, summer afternoons when the world had gone all silver and gold, and a quiet place in the shade became my most meaningful achievement. That was the childhood I remembered. Do we allow time for children to be enchanted?

History's Powerful Hand

The depths of emotions not easily achieved in a standard-driven classroom were not simply dealing with enchantment. Censorship designed to protect children faced serious challenges from the Illinois law that said we must educate about the holocaust. My partner and I did that through a national program called "Facing history and ourselves." We used stories, films, photographs, field trips, and survivor visits to open young minds to the limitless damage humankind can inflict on its members. We devised a 28-day unit (later 36 days) repeated throughout the year. By the end of seventh grade, every student would have experienced our unit. Not exposing children to the critical issues of lived experiences deprives them of the material that teaches them to think critically (Noddings 2004). I knew kids asked challenging and socially critical questions as a result of this unit, but again these were not desired outcomes and the unit stole time from test preparation necessary for student success. This unit, too, gave way to standardized curriculum.

I struggled with war veteran realities amidst the bland renditions of cultural whitewash we called middle-school curriculum. Our tales of westward expansion envisioned an empty land open to easy settlement by our productive, industrious forefathers. Students watched such movies as *Rambo* (1985) in their own time. From what was I protecting them? Violence? Many endured abuses and neglect in

their personal lives. Why not recognize their realities? My principal would not allow me to include *Dead poet's society* (1989) in my poetry unit "because we do not want the children to think about suicide, now do we?" Bland platitudes tranquilize. This disconnection from the world I knew made school seem a fantasyland that misled children into expectations of an unreal happiness that could lead to serious distress and confusion in adult life.

When I began teaching middle school, whole language and whole learning were the rage. Teacher-selected materials and teacher-inspired moments guided instruction in many of the classrooms in my district. David Elkind (1981), John Lounsbury and Johnston (1988), James Beane and Richard Lipka (1986), Donald Graves (1983), and Nancy Atwell (1987) were the authors of influence at the time. The "middle-school movement" was in full swing. We had moved from a junior high school model, designed as high school prep, to a more learner-centered curriculum that accommodated development of children at this age. Our team-teaching approach gave a degree of autonomy to each grade level, with special field trips, heterogeneous grouping, and interdisciplinary units that took days or even weeks to complete. "Student engagement" passed as the by-words of the day.

When we began our holocaust unit, we sent home permission slips. We made arrangements for certain students, at their parents' request, to be in the library while their peers participated in our unit. By the second session, children did not want to miss out. The school was abuzz with discussion.

From that buzz came a survivor who worked in our cafeteria. She was one of the women in our food line. She approached me one day when she finished work and asked if she could tell her story to our class. She varied her story from presentation to presentation as her focus shifted or a memory overtook her. Sometimes the awfulness of her tale silenced her for a few days, but she returned, and answered questions or revisited what she could not tell the time before.

We asked students as their last project of the year to create some sort of a response to the holocaust unit. They had art room supplies, video cameras, and a tour of memorial sculptures to inspire them. They asked me to write a poem that responded to the materials. One year, and with lots of support, I came up with this memory of our lunch lady's tale.

Blue velvet triptych
Panel 1:
She turned on us
Blue eyes, bluer than the fabled blue planet.
Her blond hair, whitened with wisdom,
Curled and crested about her head in an aura.
She wrapped her words in humility,
Born of another place, another time.
She apologized for her age.
She apologized for her broken English,
Otherwise unnoticeable.
She apologized for telling her story,
Unrehearsed to the students.
She apologized for her broken story line,
Interrupted by anguish and immensity.

She apologized for harshness,
For the hurtfulness of her tale.
She apologized with an old world respect
For the teacher, for the learning,
For the students' directed discovery.
She told a tale of the shattering
Of her old world.
Panel 2:
She came from Teresva
On to Teresenschtad,
A child making the trip
From home to ghetto first.
Young though she was, maybe thirteen,
She was of interest to the Nazi machine.
She would be selected
As part of a special study,
Twins for Herr Doctor in Auschwitz.
Now she administers food
To our children in cafeteria lines,
Kids whose age reflects the other time.
Eagerly, warmly, she dishes
Large portions to each
And slices of white bread, buttered and cut.
Always she needs to be checked,
Or she would give it all away.
Will she ever serve enough?
Penance for one piece she stole
From her sister, her twin.
She spun away from him
Shouting "No! No! No!"
"Mummy, daddy, tell him no!
I won't give it to him.
Tell him I'm four,
I can have it. It was my birthday!"
She plunged her hands deep in the pockets
And locked her arms to her sides.
She wore blue velvet
With blue velvet eyes, springtime soft hair.
Teresva to Teresenschtad and the train
To Auschwitz
Neither new coat nor little lady
Showed the devastating descent
The black velvet trim gave her an air
Of majesty and propriety.
Precious child of a proper Czechoslovakian family.
"Klein swine! Klein swine! We'll see
Who will deny the big bad wolf!" The soldier
Shouted across the language barrier
Across time.
"On your life, let me have it!"
Massive arms raked her up,
Flabby jowls pumped the reddened face.
Fine German steel flashed from its sheath.
Fury forced the blade between arm and body.

Mindless fury, cultivated hatred
Severed one arm and then the other.
Red blood surged and spurted,
Blue velvet turned to brown.
He flung her fragile blue frame,
A family's fluttering hope and future,
Back at the faltering mother
Shrieking horror and blinding shock
Joined in one voice, the siren
That would open the gates of hell
To the grinning, grimacing soldier.
Child of god died
And died again that day.
Panel 3:
I whirl with the stories of victims
Always current in my mind,
But her images of her niece
Put chills in my spine
What beast could be so
Tormented, so driven to
The dismemberment of this child in blue.
Sunday school teaching comes hard to me
It challenges my own resistance,
Duplicity permeates practices
I've witnessed.
Innocence of faith fled,
When as a fledgling I faced,
The raw undoctored world.
Still I cherish the children.
Four-year-olds don't ask
Why the doctrine and the practice
Diverge so readily in history.
They come delighted,
Ready to share.
"Teacher, teacher, I have a new coat!"
She twirls, arms extended
Pauses and plunges hands deeply into pockets.
Blue velvet coat, and eyes,
Twinkling eyes smile,
Springtime blonde hair,
Settles on her little shoulders.
A child of god? An echo?

P. Hilton

Poetry and the Meaning of Place

In a series of autobiographical essays collected in *The real west marginal way* (1986) the poet, Richard Hugo, talked about a behavior he called "homing." It was, for him, the tendency, maybe even the need, to visit those magical places of childhood, to be in a place that the person ingested at an early age. Such a place may

nurture or haunt the rest of one's life. Part place, part subject of the imagination; going back there is never fully satisfying, but it is essential. Homing is a little like grounding, keeping it real.

For Hugo, the slough, west marginal way, and the Duwanish River were spaces known better to his imagination than to his intellect. He would find himself writing about something there or, just as spontaneously, he would find he had traveled there as part of some other planned destination. These places were hugely important to his poetry and his philosophy and his psychology. Theodore Reothke, another Northwest poet, saw such places as the liminal boundaries of childhood. Perhaps they are the adult access to the "secret places" of childhood Langeveld (as cited in Pinar et al. 1995, p. 440) wrote about as undetermined and mysterious, as the fuzzy, unfocused place where we feel at home without risk. Langeveld declared that this place of intimacy goes beyond curriculum and needs to be honored in children, a more likely prospect if it were honored in adults as well.

As I thought about the sensitivity that Langeveld and his student, Van Manen (*The tone of teaching*, 1986) demonstrated in their descriptions and concerns for the world of the child, a world completely lost in the age of standards and learner outcomes, I was more pleased with my own efforts at teaching public school. My poem, "walking reading" attempts to capture the secret world of one immigrant child who shared his experiences with me. In his devotion to memory, he created a secret place that will continue to haunt his quiet moments, and mine. I put it here for consideration along those lines.

Walking reading
I walked about the classroom
Quietly encouraging the page turning
One hopes will accompany sustained silent reading,
And imagining my best Ichobad Crane looks,
Wishing each book, these middle graders found,
Was a page turner on its own.
Fernando sat transfixed.
His book could have been up-side-down.
This eleven year old boy was gone—far beyond reading.
My slow cruising halted,
As I attempted to return him to our task.
Proximity! The look! … tools of our trade employed.
Nothing—no recognition.
So, finally, I asked.
Long ago—two years at about this time of day—
Two boys rode out, as they had each midday,
To cool their herd of eight water buffalo.
They each sat on the neck of a leader,
Side-by-side, moving at a prehistoric pace.
Every day they talked, they sat in the sun,
Half submerged in muddy water,
While the buffaloes' large nostrils, which just cleared the translucent surface,
Puffed out snorts and sighs—content in this ancient symbiosis.
Friend—with life-friend—now lost to the modern age.
This ritual had gone on
Since he was five and his friend was six.

Now he sits in my reading class
With his past so distant,
Yet, only two years ago!
I wondered,
Was it something in the text he read,
Maybe a meaningful moment of a friend described,
That carried him across seventeen hours of flying time
To his Filipino river home,
His best friend,
And his not-of-this-time-and-world expression?
Maybe it was the time of day,
Or the slanting of the light in the room,
Or just the quiet breathing?

P. Hilton

Curriculum as Poetry

Poetry has been part of what I teach. It offers a way of understanding and reporting as well. As a reader of limited ability, I found entry into the rich world of language and imagery. Confinement and limitations trouble my soul. Logic suffers the limitations of linearity. The human spirit transcends these limitations, but our language only allows fragmented understanding and furtive glimpses of this transcendence. Poetry is less confining.

At the University of Oregon I worked with an anthropologist, Richard Chaney, as I studied for my master's degree. His inspiration had been working with and reading Carlos Castaneda. Castaneda was not considered politically, or academically, correct at that time, so we read Clifford Geertz (1973), David Bidney (1970), Stephen Toulmin (1972), and Paul Ricoeur (1975) to inform our understandings of culture and the limitations of language. We also had guest speakers, including a local shaman from the still extant tribes of the Pacific Northwest. Chaney's theme throughout was that scholars needed to pay highest regard to what he called "the potentially creative human imagination." Chaney was not a lover of contemporary schooling because he did not believe that enterprise showed any such regard. He told us, "we cannot hold human enterprises accountable for their failures, but we can hold them accountable for 'the quality of their intent,' and that damned contemporary schooling."

In his writings and teachings William H. Schubert (1986, 1996, 2003) frequently questions the enterprise of contemporary schooling. His concern is that the enterprise pays scant attention to the questions, "what is worth knowing … doing … teaching … remembering …? And how can we best teach those things?" In his works he honors many of the curricularists who came before, but implies a faith in the questioning minds of practising teachers. As a student of his I have been profoundly challenged. He would have us consider how we might open out schools so that they embrace the edges of the knowable, the possible, and the hopeful.

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Chapter 9
The Resilience of Soul

Patricia Cranton

Abstract This chapter describes how the systems of higher education can smother the soul through institutional policies and procedures, mandated curriculum, and social expectations and norms. Yet the soul is resilient, and educators face their constraints and continue to believe in soulful teaching and learning. Using the stories from my own practice, I suggest that we should bring back the soul through mythopoetic pedagogy. Reciprocal story-telling, creating and beholding artistic work, and crafting evocative experiences are some of the ways we can engage in mythopoetic pedagogy. We can create joyful learning and connect deeply and meaningfully with each other.

Introduction

"What are you looking for in a journal?"
"How many pages do you want?"
"How many references should we include?"
"Can you just tell me what you want?"
"What is the deadline for this?"
"Can you clarify the requirements of this course?"
"Can you just teach me?"
"How many times per week should I post a message online?"
"What are your expectations for this assignment?"

What have we done? What kind of system have we created when these are the questions students ask of us? Where is the joy in learning? Where is the imagination? The heart? The soul? In this chapter, I explore the loss of soul in teaching and learning in higher education and the resilience of soul when we nurture it, care for it, and celebrate it. I tell my story, and then I use Willis's framework of reciprocal story-telling, creating artistic work, and crafting evocative experiences to describe my practice (Willis and Carden 2004).

T. Leonard, P. Willis (eds.), *Pedagogies of the Imagination,*

Loss of Soul

It takes only a few minutes' thought to list a dozen characteristics of educational systems that seem deliberately designed to take the soul out of teaching and learning. Large lumbering systems that see themselves as needing to be accountable to those who fund them and those who hire their students cannot be much bothered with the joy of learning. In a discussion of authenticity in teaching, Hunt (2006) describes four types of constraints on authenticity: institutional (for example, requirements to have examinations), structural (for example, timetables and classroom configurations), policy (for example, the nature of teaching evaluations and the role of teaching evaluations in promotion and tenure decisions), and social (for example, the expectations about what a teacher should be doing in a class). In my research on authenticity, educators often mention the profound influence of such constraints on their practice.

When I asked a military educator about conflicts between his values and the teaching context, he went so far as to say, "I have no values when I teach." When I questioned him further on this, he said that everything was given to him, there was no room for interpretation, and his job was to "deliver" the instruction. This story may sound extreme, but of the 47 college and university faculty and literacy educators we have talked to over the last five years in our research, almost all cite serious constraints to their being able to be authentic in their teaching (see Cranton and Carusetta 2004 for a report on the first three years of this project). I suggest that this is also a loss of soul. I will not review all of the characteristics of educational institutions and systems that smother soul, but I will describe a few that seem especially common and those that teachers cannot see how to sidestep.

Most institutions have policies and procedures that seem, especially to new, untenured, or part-time educators, to be unquestionable. Syllabi need to be turned in to departments well in advance of the beginning of the course (and therefore before the educator has met the students or knows anything about them); often syllabi need to contain specific information, even with specific wording regarding issues such as deadlines, grading procedures, plagiarism, and so forth; in many places the nature of the grading is a matter of policy—the percentage of grades attributed to examinations, for example, or even the overall distribution of grades. Such policies, designed to protect the rights of students from bad or unfair teaching practices, also curtail spontaneity, imagination, relationships between teachers and students, and joy. The very language used in course syllabi and institutional policies frightens the soul. Learning is "required," "assigned," "submitted," and "assessed." Listen to the language in the following fairly typical sentence (italics used to emphasize the soul-frightening words). "In order to meet the *requirements* of the course, students *must submit* two *assignments* to the *instructor* by the *deadlines* given in the course syllabus in addition to *successfully completing* five *quizzes* and the final *examination*."

Curriculum can be mandated in a variety of ways. In Canadian community colleges, for example, curriculum committees are often comprised of government

curriculum consultants (instructional design people), a subject-matter expert (a teacher), and representatives from the businesses and industries who will hire the graduates. College faculty are given the completed curriculum to "deliver" (teach) to their students. In large, multi-sectioned classes, there appears to be an assumption that all sections must "cover" the same content to ensure that all students have the same learning experience (do students ever have the same learning experience?) so teachers of these sections are expected to follow the same curriculum, use the same materials, and give the same assignments and examinations. In other slightly more subtle ways course content is mandated through a system of prerequisites, credits, and program structures. If my course is a prerequisite to yours, I must meet your expectation for what students will have learned before coming to your course. And somewhere people have some understanding of what three credits mean, or six, and my course must meet that often unarticulated expectation. Of course, this all seems quite reasonable. We need to have a common understanding of credits and grades and requirements in order to understand what students coming out of a program know. But do we really understand? Or has the system taken on a life of its own, one that serves as a rationale for not taking risks or doing something different or going to the art gallery rather than sitting in the classroom on a Friday afternoon?

Perhaps most insidious of those things that make for soulless teaching and learning are the social expectations and norms within institutions and in the larger community and society. They are unnamed and often untraceable. I have a simple example from my own practice, an issue that really probably made little difference to anyone but is symptomatic of what I am referring to here. It is tradition for students to meet for a full day at the beginning of term. Since I like to do participatory planning with the students to prepare the course outline during the first meeting, I did not need a full day. After the planning session, we would need time to collect resources and prepare for our first topic, so a half-day meeting would serve well for the initial class. This apparently could not be done. Or if it was to be done, it needed to be done secretly. "They" would notice. Questioning revealed that the concern was about the number of hours we met over the term. I asked who, specifically, was counting those hours. What this came down to was that it was an expectation, a tradition, the way things were done.

Again, these norms are reflected in our language. We refer to "lectures" and, in some places, call faculty "lecturers." This tells us what we are supposed to do. We "mark" papers and complain about how much "marking" we have to do. We know what is expected of teachers and we do it. Or we pretend to. Even though the students in my courses evaluate their own learning, and I only provide feedback on their projects, I still find myself saying, "I spent the weekend 'marking' papers," especially when speaking to someone who does not know how I practice my craft. I am a teacher, therefore I mark papers. We may think it does not matter, but it does. It stifles, oppresses, and suffocates the soul. It was not that long ago that we thought it did not matter to use sexist language—after all, everyone "knew" we meant all people even though we said "he." But it turns out it did matter, and it matters in our teaching too.

The Resilience of Soul

Robert Smithdas became deaf and blind from meningitis at the age of four. His poem, "Shared beauty" (1982, p. 34) shows me the resilience of soul.

Shared beauty
I cannot see a rainbow's glory spread
across a rain washed sky when the storm is over;
nor can I see or hear the birds that cry
their songs among the clouds, or through bright clover.
You tell me that the night is full of stars
and in my heart I wish I could share
with you this beauty that I can never know.
I only know that when I touch a flower,
or feel the sun and wind upon my face,
or hold your hand in mine, there is brightness
within my soul that words can never trace.
I call it Life, and laugh at its delight.

I work most often with graduate students, people who have spent many years listening to lectures and producing papers to be graded in order to prove they listened to the lectures and perhaps have something of their own to add (though not necessarily). They have developed strong habits of mind (Mezirow 2000) about what teachers and students should be doing. And very often it is not much fun. Yet it does not take long, usually, for the spirit to bounce back, for the soul to revive. Even though initial resistance may be strong, people really do prefer to be joyful than to be burdened down, and as long as they see that they are indeed learning—perhaps in a different way, perhaps even in a more meaningful way—they become engaged in the magic of it all. This past term, a student said to me, with some amazement, that she finally realized she didn't need to *prove* her learning to me. That was difficult for her, as she had been proving her learning for many, many years, but it did finally feel like a relief.

We find the resilience of soul all around us, not only in our classrooms. Survivors of natural disasters such as New Orleans' Hurricane Katrina gather together the pieces of their lives and rebuild, sometimes making music all the while. Viktor Frankl (1984) documents the resilience of soul of the most horrific of circumstances: the concentration camps of World War II. People escape from abusive relationships and conditions and sing again. People live with and through oppression, poverty, and tragedy and once again come to watch the sunset with joy. I do not intend to minimize the experience of tragedy and pain, but rather to celebrate how we humans can believe and survive. And this I emphasize to make the point that it is never too late to bring the soul back into teaching and learning.

My Story

When I was a new faculty member, some thirty years ago now, teaching courses about which I knew nothing, and with no experience whatsoever in education, I clung with barely concealed fear to textbooks and my colleagues' course outlines.

The most preposterous thing I had to do was assign grades to mature teachers on their papers about education. In the 1970s instructional design was the answer to all questions, and I quickly learned how to write objectives, sequence instruction, choose methods based on Bloom's taxonomy, and develop criteria for assessment. This helped. At least it was a justification for telling people what to do when I felt I had no moral right to be telling them what to do.

In 1986 I moved to a position in adult education and began learning about a new field of study. Brookfield's *Understanding and facilitating adult learning* (1986) was as intriguing as a mystery novel. I discovered Malcolm Knowles, who said that adult students knew what they wanted to learn and teachers should be facilitating this process rather than telling them what to do. With only the barest bones of knowledge about my new discipline, I already realized I had found a place where I could develop a way of teaching that did not grate against who I am and how I relate to others.

When Mezirow's (1991) book, *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*, came out, I was intrigued and turned my full attention to understanding and exploring this theory. Being a logical, rational person by nature and by following the scholarly traditions of higher education, I worked with and wrote about transformative learning in the cognitive, rational way in which Mezirow described the theory. Two kindergarten teachers initiated the turn in my path that leads me to this writing today. I was teaching a course on transformative learning in a summer school session a year or two after my *Understanding and promoting transformative learning* (Cranton 1994) was first released. Usually, my students were from the adult education program, but this summer there were two early childhood education students, who were also practising kindergarten teachers, in the course. They offered to lead an activity in which the class created a collage to represent the transformative experience. Smiling to myself and living fully within my stereotyped notion of kindergarten teaching, I agreed, and we all brought magazines, scissors, coloured paper, and glue sticks to the next class. The product was stunning. I had my first glimpse of how to use imagination and art in understanding transformative learning. Since that time, I have almost always offered collage as a group activity in my courses, and I have come to include a variety of arts-based learning projects as options in all of my teaching, even in courses on research methods. Ten years later, the number of paintings, sculptures, quilts, music CDs, scrapbooks, poems, and short stories that have passed through my delighted hands is beyond counting.

The year that the kindergarten teachers changed my perspective on what could be done in the classroom, I was drawn to the work of Robert Boyd and John Dirkx, and I began to integrate my interest in Jung's writings with my understanding of transformative learning. Dirkx (1997) graciously agreed to write a chapter for a volume on new directions in adult and continuing education that I was editing (Cranton 1997), and I continued to explore his and other writers' imaginative approaches to transformation. My writing and my teaching developed in parallel, with my teaching leading the way.

I now enter a classroom with knowledge and experience in my field. Now it is my knowledge and experience rather than the lack of it that informs my practice. Learners come to adult education with many personal objectives: to get a better job, to gain a new skill, to focus on social change, to develop personally. Those goals

become my goals, along with the broader goals of adult education: to help people realize their potential to become more liberated, more socially responsible, more critically reflective, more open to alternatives, better able to think independently of the collective of humanity. To do this, it is clear to me that we need to engage not only with our minds, but also with our soul, spirit, and heart.

Bringing Back the Soul Through Mythopoetic Pedagogy

It was through the writings of Dirkx (1997, for example) that I came to understand the meaning of "mythopoetic," though my understanding is limited (and leaves me wondering what I am doing in these pages). Mythos reflects a facet of knowing that we can see in symbols, images, stories, and myths. When we frame learning as a cognitive process only, we neglect its emotional, spiritual, and imaginative aspects. The frame is incomplete. The person is fragmented. Dirkx (1997) writes of nurturing soul in teaching and learning, and he describes soul through experiences: being awestruck by a sunset or gripped by pain and helplessness. We experience soul through art, music, and film. It is that magic moment that transcends rationality and gives depth, power, mystery, and meaning to life. How do we bring this into our teaching and learning? I use Willis's framework to organize my ideas here (Willis and Carden 2004).

Reciprocal Story-Telling

Stories encourage us to respond, change, and learn about others and ourselves. Everyone loves a good story. When I think about story-telling in relation to learning, Mary Catherine Bateson's (1994) *Peripheral visions* comes to mind, a book in which she reflects on her life and work. She reminds us that certainty is not the goal of learning and that ambiguity is not something to be eliminated. It is narrative that allows us to express the ambiguity and complexity, giving us rich and deep meaning rather than trying to move toward one truth. Stories are not necessarily located within a paradigm or philosophy, though they could be, but they encourage us to think at the boundaries, at the edges, sometimes with discomfort, sometimes with pain, sometimes with tears of happiness.

Shared story-telling can be a part of teaching and learning in many and varied ways. I often begin a course on transformative learning by asking participants to share a story of a time when they experienced a deep shift in perspective (in any facet of their life). If the group is comfortable and people know each other, people share stories (if they choose) with the entire group; otherwise, the stories might be told in pairs with examples only presented to a larger audience. To my surprise, the stories are often even more vivid and deeply felt when this course is held online and participants never have the opportunity to see each other. Most recently, in an online course on transformative learning, the opening stories were remarkable in their depth, imagery,

and meaningfulness. Many shared very personal experiences: a gay man coming out, a woman's battle with drug addiction, a First Nations woman's experience as she worked through her childhood in a residential school, a person dealing with abuse. We worked together to make meaning out of the stories, articulate assumptions and values, and support one another's struggles and accomplishments. Even in courses where one would not normally think of story-telling, stories can bring the magic of another's experiences to understanding almost any topic. The tradespeople with whom I work each summer and who are becoming teachers of their trades tell me that they use stories of their own mistakes to establish closer relationships with their students and they encourage students to share their experiences through stories.

Writing or telling autobiographies is often recommended by those writers who promote critical self-reflection or transformative learning (Brookfield 1995, for example). Writing and talking about the story of our life can have a profound impact on self-awareness, relationships with others, and interpreting and understanding how our beliefs and values have evolved. My students often create scrapbook autobiographies with photographs, drawings, or symbols as well as the narrative. In a course last term, one student who had very few childhood memories decided to do a "spiralling" autobiography in which she started with a photograph from a period in her life, and then wrote from her voice at that time. If she could not remember anything, she created the story. Then she wrote with her present voice, responding to the story from the previous time in her life. She gradually worked forward with story until past and present voices were the same.

Reciprocal story-telling can be fiction. Sometimes people are unwilling or unable to share "true" stories but, even when this is not the case, telling fictional stories can be revealing and fun to do. When people are free of the boundary of "reality" stories tell us much about our thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In some classes we have created group stories where we go around the table with each person adding a new element to the story. We then look for the meaning underlying our creation. Why was this event added at this time? What does it tell us that this (fictional) character decided to act in this way?

As Clandinin and Connelly say in the epilogue to their book on narrative inquiry, "Living, telling, retelling, and reliving mark the qualities of a life" (2000, p. 187). At one point in my life, when I was fairly young, I decided that I would stop telling friends and family about the experiences that were important to me. I was concerned that I was too dependent on the reactions of others in interpreting my experiences. I did manage to do this for a while. But living without telling and retelling made the living feel flatter, less bright somehow.

Creating and Beholding Artistic Work

In the soulless classroom, there is no space for emotion, imagination, and fantasy. Dirkx (1997) describes us as being products of a culture that devalues matters of the soul. He and others (Greene 1995, for example) invite educators to enhance

learning through imagination and the arts. We can use art, fiction, film, and music in the classroom, but we can also create artistic work to represent learning or to inspire learning. Whether as beholder of art or creator of art, students gain a depth of meaning not available through intellectual discussion, cognitive reasoning, and objective debate.

When I was a child in school, we would occasionally have the opportunity to watch a "film." This involved darkening the classroom by lowering the blinds and turning off the lights or, on rare occasions when the film was for more than one grade, going down into a room in the basement of the school, where again we would be in the dark. No matter how deadly dull the "film," the excitement of doing something different in school (and especially, it seems, being in a dark room) lifted our collective spirit. Now, of course, with video it is much easier to bring film into the classroom, but perhaps it is a little less magical. Still, when we watch "teacher movies" in my adult education courses there is always something of the extraordinary in the process and the discussion that follows. Better yet, we sometimes go out to a movie in a theater, and the trappings of going somewhere together is a part of the enchantment. Last week I was facilitating an intensive five-day workshop on transformative learning. On the fourth day, even though the discussions were open and provocative, and even though the activities led people to delve deeply into their transformative experiences, we felt tired of our classroom and perhaps of the endless words—in the texts and spoken in the room. Our topic was critical self-reflection. We decided to seek out an experience outside of the classroom that would evoke critical self-reflection. We considered various art exhibits but then settled on going to a documentary movie on global warming: *An inconvenient truth*, narrated by Al Gore. As we booked the tickets online from a student's laptop computer and calculated what time we should leave, anticipation was building. We walked together to the subway, had a fifteen-minute ride, found the theater, bought popcorn, and sat together in the dark. The movie definitely provoked critical self-reflection, and our ensuing discussion was wonderful in its breadth and depth, but I think it was the process of leaving the classroom, traveling together, and sharing the experience that engaged our imagination as much as the content of the movie.

Similarly, last summer, in our course on methods and strategies in adult education for community college instructors, there was a day when we knew we needed "to do something different," so we decided on a field trip. It hardly mattered where we went or what we did, it seemed, but we listed options and discussed each carefully. We settled on going to the art gallery. This course is held in a small city in the Maritimes of Canada, and most participants had never had the opportunity to visit an art gallery. Even though the trip was not obviously related to the content of our course (aside from the general idea of bringing the arts into teaching and learning), we were rejuvenated and invigorated by the experience, and we brought our renewed energy back to our class and our discussions.

The following is a list that is typical of the learning projects I suggest in my courses. This particular list comes from a course on transformative learning, but I have the same mixture of artistic and cognitive projects in any course I facilitate.

- Reflective journal on class discussions and readings, with an emphasis on how they relate to your professional and personal life
- A drawing, sculpture, or collage that represents your learning
- A poem that represents your learning
- An autobiography, including an analysis of transformative experiences in your life
- A commentary on a book about transformative learning, e.g. Mezirow's (1991) book
- A commentary on an article about transformative learning
- Design of a workshop in which transformative learning is promoted
- Leading an activity in our class to illustrate a concept relevant to transformative learning
- Conducting a survey or interviews with others on the nature of their transformative experiences and reporting on the results
- A short story illustrating a transformative experience
- A "time capsule" of your life in which you place objects representing transformative experiences, including an analysis of your time capsule from the perspective of an anthropologist who finds it in the future
- A short paper written from the perspective of another person whose view you do not agree with

I also always encourage participants to go beyond the list of examples and develop creative projects that reflect who they are and how they prefer to express themselves. For example, recently several of the students in the transformative learning course have used music to describe their learning experience, either music they created or music that speaks to them in some way. Usually about one-half of the participants choose artistic learning projects. It brings me, and the participants, great joy to use art to facilitate and express learning.

Recent artistic projects created in my courses include:

- A handcrafted "snakes and ladders" game in which the ladders represented personal transformative experiences and the snakes represented the shadow side of transformation
- A sculpture created through welding, depicting an educator and his learners in a welding shop
- A hand-sewn and personally designed quilt representing the phases of the student's development over the course of her studies
- A CD of music composed and played by the student
- An abstract painting depicting the intricacies of qualitative data analysis
- A short story of a young woman's first trip to Paris where she fell in love
- A photo journal and collage of a young man's time in South Africa
- A poem about the grief of losing a friend in a drowning accident
- A fictionalized account of a researcher's adventures, including drawings and photographs in a collage

The courses have been on adult education methods, research methods, transformative learning, authentic teaching, and qualitative research, and the students have been at

both the undergraduate and graduate level. These are just a few of the many projects I have had the honor of receiving, but I think they illustrate what can be done.

Crafting Evocative Experience

Willis (2005) suggests that there can be a kind of evocative chemistry between people through which a person becomes enchanted, empowered, and inspired. The learner "feels the way," and catches the spirit of the learning. He or she is touched in a way that does not come through words, through the mind, but rather in a way that comes through the heart, the spirit, or the body. Deliberately crafting evocative experiences may in itself preclude the evocative experience, but I think we can spontaneously craft evocative experiences—in the moment, when the spirit is ready, when the heart is open.

Apps writes, "Teaching from the heart means teaching from the depths of who we are with the hope that we will touch the hearts of those with whom we work" (1996, p. 63). In order to catch the evocative moment, our heart needs to be open and our soul needs to be honest. I tell the following story in the second edition of *Understanding and promoting transformative learning* (Cranton 2006) and I think it illustrates what I understand an evocative experience to be.

I remember Jim from three or four summers ago. He was probably the oldest person in the group of students taking an adult education methods course, and he obviously had a long-held fear of being "in school." For the first week and a half, Jim was the class clown. He was friendly and funny; he found a joke in everything we did. We all liked Jim very much, but I was also uncomfortable with how Jim used his clown role to avoid anything that might get serious. I no longer remember the exact circumstances that led to Jim's dramatic moment, but it was one of those everyday occurrences to which Dirkx (2000) suggests we pay attention. Jim suddenly shouted out, "I can't do this. I can't be a teacher. This was not meant to be. I am quitting now." We were stunned. I thought, "What did I say? What did I do?" and I could see the same questions in others' faces. It was a beautiful summer day. The sun was shining into our classroom windows, and someone was going by with a lawnmower. The only thing I could think to do was to break and somehow acknowledge Jim's moment. I suggested that we walk in the nearby woods and just ponder what we were all doing here. I knew Jim was not connected to me; he was much more comfortable with the presence of men. As we were leaving the classroom, I quietly asked two or three of the men in the group to walk with Jim.

We wandered for half an hour or so. I did not speak to Jim. I sensed I should not. But I participated by walking and pondering with others. After class, a group of the men took Jim to play miniature golf, then to a local pub for a meal, then back to the residence for an evening of talk. The next day, Jim came to me and said that he thought "it would be OK," that he could do it after all. He dropped the clown role. He participated in serious dialogue, and he became open about his fears, especially his fear of writing. I think this was an evocative experience.

In my most recent online course on transformative learning, I asked participants to describe "moments of joy" in their teaching. Many of the stories they told were about wordless connections with students. Perhaps words interfere; they bring in the cognitive and the rational and scare away the soul. I think of my own experience with art. When I view art, I must be alone to fully engage with the work (or at least with someone who remains silent). If we can become comfortable with the choice of not needing or using words on these occasions, and most importantly if we can become aware of when those occasions occur, we can go far in nurturing soul.

Conclusion

Soulless teaching and learning involves telling students what's what, giving out information, and assessing the consequences of our actions. Palmer uses circles of trust in "approaching soul truth" (2004, p. 114). One facilitation rule is: "No fixing, no saving, no advising, no setting each other straight" (2004, p. 115). When we advise others on what to do, Palmer suggests, we are implying:

> If you take my advice, you will surely solve your problem. If you take my advice but fail to solve your problem, you did not try hard enough. If you fail to take my advice, I did the best I could. So I am covered. No matter how things come out, I no longer need to worry about you and your vexing problem. (2004, p. 117)

Many of our educational systems, institutions, and programs do seem to function this way: I will tell you, you will listen, you will get it or you will not, and I will find out when I test you.

Through story, poetry, music, art, and evocative experiences, we can approach teaching and learning in soulful ways. We can create joyful learning and connect deeply and meaningfully with each other. Whether it is a trades instructor telling a story about a time when he failed miserably in his work or a teacher catching that moment when someone needs to be touched by her heart, we can bring worth and significance to the everyday occurrences in our classrooms.

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Part II
Mythopoesis in Educational Practice

Chapter 10
Imaginal Transformation and Schooling

James Bradbeer and Abdul Ghafoor Abdul Raheem

Abstract In this chapter the authors seek to make conceptual connections between the quest of the creative imagination as elucidated by Ibn ‘Arabi and ordinary classroom work in a school in Melbourne, Australia. That the school is Islamic serves no other function than to cast into relief what the authors ultimately wish to achieve, which is two things. Firstly, they wish to show that imaginal formation and transformation are not only a significant part of humanities work in schools but, once identified, must be seen to be the proper substance of humanities studies. Secondly, they wish to set forth the idea that, even in western world contexts, the goals of a pedagogy sensitive to imaginal transformation retain powerful life-giving equivalence with the divine goal of the medieval Sufi master.

Staffroom Chats and Ibn ‘Arabi’s Ghost

> God is a meaningful designation. (Corbin 1998, p. 124)

Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi is not quite the flavor of the month in Islamic circles. In fact, for around 250 years the Sheikh al Akbar has been a flavor out of favor. Thus when my friend Abdul Ghafoor was a student at the Islamic University of Medinah all he learned about Ibn ‘Arabi was that he was an author to be avoided.

It is therefore with some interest that I have noticed that the *Australian Islamic Review* has been making a feature of Ibn ‘Arabi’s writings in a succession of issues in the past year. Alas, on reading the given excerpts, I have been dismayed to find highly conventional Sunni statements, with no discernible bearing upon the Sufi “Master of the Imaginal,” whom Henry Corbin presents in his bewitching study *Alone with the alone* (1998). Muslim intellectuals in Australia, aware of the status Ibn ‘Arabi has acquired in esoteric western erudition, are perhaps seeking to reclaim the shunned master.

Maybe it is the fate of a man who wrote thousands upon thousands of manuscript pages that he can be apprehended as any person—including Corbin—might wish to apprehend him. There is something for everyone! Nonetheless, with Abdul Ghafoor as my guide, assessor, and collaborator, I returned to Corbin’s Ibn ‘Arabi. He and I,

T. Leonard, P. Willis (eds.), *Pedagogies of the Imagination,*

bent upon finding a language adequately illustrious and hopeful to illuminate our teaching practice, had decided to spend a couple of terms holding our practical staffroom discussions in the light of the master as it shines out of Corbin's imposing study. Abdul Ghafoor and I teach in a Muslim school, myself in English and Abdul in Arabic and also in a Koran-focused subject called "Texts and Traditions." This is the record of those staffroom chats. The ghost of Ibn 'Arabi made the company three but, apart from a few gnomic utterances, the ghost would be silent.

To enhance our authority, and to triangulate Corbin's perception of the sheikh, we extended our encounter by a slow reading of one of Ibn 'Arabi's accounts of the meaning of the *Miraj*, the Night Journey of the Prophet, the ascension from that now most contested spot, the site of the Al Aqsa Mosque, into the very presence of that "useful designation" God.

Traveling to the Mecca of the Mind

First Glimpses

> He who knows himself knows his Lord. (Corbin 1998, p. 95)

On a recent term holiday, I discovered a school atlas from the 1880s in an antique shop in Beechworth—Ned Kelly country. It was full of handwritten notes, on pages provided for the scholar, and I searched through these for anything personal. There was nothing. All that this couple of dozen pages of copperplate recorded was factual detail, detail only sophisticated by grouping: rivers, mountains, populations. It was a memento of an impoverished authoritarian pedagogy. No ideas. No warmth. No thrill.

We have left all that stuff behind and good riddance! Our epoch could not function, anyway, from such a basis. The demands of our technologically advanced age, of our age of refinements in life and culture—of increased leisure, more disposable income, booming entertainment and hospitality industries—requires citizens of a different stamp from those of 1880.

But yet, as everybody knows, our epoch in schools—despite the evolutionary changes in our culture—is also one dominated by features, like testing regimes, that militate against personal interest, against freedom of elaboration, and against inconvenient depth. It is usual for teachers of Year 12, the final year, to commence the course with some remark to their students about the frills being gone. The time for fussing with talk, and for fun and diversion, is over. Now everyone must be in harness just for the exams. Results are everything.

It is usual also for this attitude to be found in the textbooks. In the English texts I use, for example, one certainly finds a sophisticated battery of approaches, but the approaches are reduced to pieces as rote learnable as the atlas's compilations of longest rivers and tallest mountains. The heart exposed in *The great Gatsby* is rendered in numerated themes; the complexities of the newspaper columnist's art are

boiled down to about twenty "uses of language"; mnemonics (TEEL,[1] for example) are provided to guide acceptable student composition.

Though education clearly carries the hopes of the community of a school—the parents as well as the students—it is confronting to note the curriculum documents' focus upon instrumentality, even when they are dealing with the human heart. Overarching hope is used to badger the students: if they really want this and this, then the demands of big block authorities like state curriculum boards, or university and professional entry requirements, have to be met. There is a sense in which excitement, adventure, personal fulfilment, profound encounter, and authentic life are not relevant any more. Schools are where the uroboros of the state eats its tail.

Within these instrumental structurings it is curious to ask a question from the universe of discourse represented by our silent companion: given this situation, who might be, what might be, Lord? Who calls to one? What imperatives of a glad heart—rather than the mere oppressiveness of the exigent—move one forward? This is the question we pursue.

Ibn 'Arabi lived at the time of Islam's greatest extension. It was a time of confidence, of widespread literacy, of philosophy, of considerable cultural inclusiveness. In such ways it might be compared with our own time. There was then, however, a smaller elite who participated in the culture's freedoms. As a general rule, premodern society required that around 80 per cent of the population should be laborers and peasants. A consciousness of privilege and of elite status pervades Ibn 'Arabi's writing. All his writing is about how those with the liberty to think live in their minds; and all of this is organized around the concept "God." Addressing the sophisticated minority, he was keen to distinguish between a God authentically experienced and "the God created in the faiths" (Corbin 1998, p. 118) who is the absolute God of a person who "remains veiled to God."

This intangible, elitist, ancient discourse is not only not mad but, as we hope to show, it gives crucial, if quaint, description to everyday talk in humanities classrooms.

For me and also Abdul (in his own distinctive way) the beginning lies in there being nothing so firm as even a word beyond "God." It is an utterance designating what we do not quite know how to express, and so designating theological substance only when it is named thus: "God." In my case, the concept personifies, and rolls into one, certain equivalents of things: equivalents of hope, of beauty, of love, of conscience. Anyone who has found the angelic in another person no longer needs angels to prove the point. Anyone who has felt the collapse of meaning in depression, grief, or the mundanity of job loss, knows that one need not be comparing when one talks of a fall from grace. Eternal punishments can be temporal. Eternal life can be apprehended in moments. Then there is the immensity, sometimes, of our dreams, or of our response to an image or to music. For Abdul—who grew up under a repressive dictatorship, answerable for its crimes to no one—behind the meaning of God there lies a pre-eminent need for justice.

[1] Topic sentence, expand, example/explain, link.

The things Ibn ‘Arabi has to say about God give us a unique way of talking about the things the word might usefully designate: hope, beauty, love, justice; words that, in the vast business of the educational processing of students, can otherwise seem merely rhetorical. Ibn ‘Arabi was not troubled by our need to place God within a secular world, yet his conception of deity proves a fruitful one to entertain even in our own day. The reason for this springs from two features of his writing. The first is his faithfulness to the Muslim idea that Allah is beyond images and knowledge—and, in a narrow sense, is therefore off the world stage. The second is that, whilst Allah is strictly beyond knowing, he is not beyond our feeling or our personal experience. The God who cannot be known or represented is nonetheless known and represented in human sensibility. Ibn ‘Arabi’s field is this human sensibility. So in his elaborations, from within a medieval, totally sacralized world, Ibn ‘Arabi has much to say about what it means to feel one’s life within a modern, totally secular world. His treatment of the *Miraj*, the Night Journey of the Prophet, is entirely metaphorical—the more pointedly metaphorical because the prophet’s own journey, taken to be actual, is there presented as a type of every soul’s journey in life, Ibn ‘Arabi’s own included.

It is this experiential subjectivity that makes him interesting. He gives the phenomena of the world a curious equality with divinity: “God can only be in external reality,” he wrote, “through the form of the creature, and the creature can only be there through the form of God” (Morris 2002, p. 57). Above all, the world with all its beings, ourselves included, is an expression of love, and so the subtle shapings of love—in language, in art, in law and in justice, in vision and in revelation, the “intermediate world” (Morris 2002, p. 16) between hard things and pure spirit, these things that are the focus of human concern—are also God. The quest for knowledge in this view is a journey into love. Ibn ‘Arabi’s theology is a description of the subtle experience of life, a metaphorical phenomenology, and it is in this that its contemporary use for us lies.

A humanities teacher is involved in subtle journeyings all the time, journeyings that move through the intangibly apprehended world where “God” can be a significant term; through the imaginary structurings that Corbin calls “the imaginal.” Abdul Ghafoor gave me a first illustration.

His student Hanin is the subject of this story. As Hanin is also my student in English, I can describe her. She is a gem; firmly scarfed, immaculate as a nun, lively, cheerful, intelligent, and also good. Schools are often cruel places, and never more cruel than when a student teacher is failing before a class. I have even seen students whom I admire brutally rejecting an incompetent student teacher, and the last time I was in charge of a trainee was the worst. Only Hanin was able to keep open the channel of kindness to this poor mature-age person, and do so with gentle leadership—discretely taking the role of class representative when she offered her interest and support to the student teacher. So, that is Hanin: a beautiful person.

In Abdul Ghafoor’s class an eschatological topic came up: it was the coming of the anti-Christ, the *dajjal*. Hanin has grown up with a sense of the whole wrapping up of time, which is to be inaugurated by the epoch of the *dajjal*. The story of cosmic war, of blood and fire, and of the final vanquishing of the anti-Christ is familiar to her from talk in a pious home, and from the imams musing about George W. Bush

in the mosques. The story is object, there in her head. It will happen: "the *dajjal* will come" she said, in Abdul's recounting, "and he will do this and this!" Yet her seeking led her to ask, nonetheless, for confirmation.

Abdul Ghafoor's response was etymological. He looked at the roots of words. The accounts are derived from the word *dajjal*, a package of qualities, involving confusion, rather than a personal name. It therefore allows other interpretations: it may not necessarily denote a person at all. Hanin's response to this genesis of a story was the first thing to strike Abdul. She was "not able to imagine that the story could be questioned." At the end she was just "perplexed": "But how can we find the truth," she protested, "if there is this meaning and that meaning!"

In her conscious self, Hanin is neither rigid nor dogmatic. She is as warm in such dialogical encounters as she was to that student teacher. "Rigidity, however," as Abdul summed it up, "can be unconscious."

Abdul told me this story twice; once in a hurry, at a day's start, with session bells ringing, and then at leisure over mugs of tea. Each time his final point was the same: "She wanted to believe," said Abdul, "but also to say 'Is this really true?' "

Here is a first instance of a journeying individual, her foot set on a long road through kingdoms in the mind. Everything seems fixed and satisfactory, but some detail chafes. Here is a mind upon the same journey through the forms of the "intermediate world," as Ibn 'Arabi describes in his metaphorical appropriation of the *Miraj*.

The second illustration comes from me. It involves another girl. Fatima has been in my classes since Year 9. She is now in her final year. No less engaging than Hanin, she is ardent-eyed, happy, and into "being real" to her teachers. She is less religious than Hanin, and would certainly not wear the *hijab* outside of school. She is imbued with that teenage Eros that is yet to find itself in partnership. She also wants to do well, and—on account of this—sought me out to talk further about an essay on the Ammaniti novel *I'm not scared* (2003). Something, she felt, was missing from her grasp of the story.

The novel is a narrative of a child and his parents. These parents, as all parents ought to be, are the firmament above and the firmament below for the child. They are the arms of love. They are the first fairy tale. They are gods. The dramatic action of the story involves their evaporation as divine powers. One has to be able to see, I said to Fatima, that it is about the falling to pieces of a childhood mythology—as Abdul Ghafoor's recourse to etymology challenged also a whole mythological structuring.

Along the way I used the word "symbolic." "What do you mean by symbolic?" asked Fatima, frowning. "Is it like when he says 'Papa was the bogeyman'?" She had cited a perfect example: this bit of fantasy organizes that bit of reality. "Yes," I said. "That is excellent. Yet not all symbols are objects like the bogeyman. For me," I went on, "the very end of the story is most powerfully symbolic, and it is just words, the grammatical meaning of which is almost empty, but which hit us all the same with the emotional force of music: 'And there was Papa, And there was me.' The music tells us that there is nothing now, the parental firmament has collapsed entirely, but there is this: I suppose that there is love still."

Here then is the field of study in our classes. It is the rising up of our life force into images and moving images, into chimes and orchestrations, into ideas that live beyond us. And here is the student's sense of incompletion, of dissatisfaction, easily taking the discourse to the perimeter of the given worlds; that alarming boundary where individuals are thrown upon their own powers of hearing, of feeling, of conceptualizing, where what they seek arises in who they are, or in who they are becoming.

Knowing their Lord, on the strange terrain of Ibn 'Arabi's intermediate realm, is knowing premised on the students' knowing themselves.

Second Glimpses

> There is no other answer than to "make oneself capable of God." (Corbin 1998, p. 172)

What an alluring thought this is! Corbin writes the first part of the sentence—"Because it is impossible to prove God, there is no other answer…" "Make oneself capable of God", with which the sentence ends, is the voice of Ibn 'Arabi. Alluring, yes, but what could it possibly mean? And could something so august bear upon the education of the young?

Making oneself capable. Education, even by root-word definition, is about actualizing the powers of a young person, but schooling is able both to impose and to liberate: it can repress the young, as well as enable them to be expressed. Many schools are founded on an overt commitment to form a certain type of young person. At its gentlest, this is a will to mother. At its toughest, it is imposition. Most religious schools (and—to widen the scope—blazer schools in general) are to be found somewhere on this spectrum between mothering and imposing. There is an impulse in religious organizations that runs counter to anyone ever becoming capable of anything as *oneself*.

Abdul Ghafoor, leaning over the arm of his chair in the staffroom at morning recess, wanted to tell me of a discussion he had with yet another young woman during the previous session. His story enables one to see that formal religion can present exactly this difficulty, a difficulty encountered directly by the young. His story enables us to see that religious *belief* itself, so sacrosanct a conception in modern religiosity, may indeed *not* be the same thing as making oneself capable of God. Far from opening up one's being to a full potential, belief might be just an act of selling oneself most ironically short.

The girl is called Aishe. In Abdul Ghafoor's class that morning the topic had turned upon the *Rashidun Khulafa*, the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, Abu-Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan and Ali ibn Abi Talib, who—in turn after the death of the Prophet—led Islam forward. Now, that three of these, and that this succession, was "rightly guided" is the point of dispute to this day between the Sunni Muslims and the Shi'a Muslims. For the latter, only Ali, the fourth, had the right—and after him his descendants. Abdul Ghafoor was, in an even-handed way,

addressing these things when Aishe spoke up. Was it not the case that one of the Sehaba, the first generation of Islam, had dreamed that he saw the Prophet shaking each of the Rightly Guided Caliphs by hand, in order of their succession, and did this not signify that the actual historical succession was right?

Well, Abdul allowed, that is what was signified! But this "dream" was the dream of a Sunni. A Shi'a Muslim is going to provide a different vision!

I expressed surprise that Aishe would so regard a dream. I know her, from her earlier years at the school, as an alarmingly audacious, worldly person, with a gift for acting and for shocking. She is a rip-this-joint kind of girl! "This does not sound," I said, "like the Aishe I know." "That is what I mean. People who are alert and rational in all the rest of their lives stop being reasonable when the discourse is religion."

But it was clear that Abdul prevailed, at least for the duration of the class, and, with him, reason prevailed, too. It is likely that the succession of the Caliphs is not so vitally important to the students' sense of faith, but there it was: faith seems often to entail a suspension of rationality, a setting aside of one's powers, and a damn-it-all commitment to strange stuff. Is making this jump what is meant by "becoming capable of God"? No, it is not.

Ibn 'Arabi's amazing world—of a literate elite, writing massive manuscript books, which slaves in scriptoria would copy; in which world the many toil and the lordly lucky ones receive their grovelling prostrations with off-handedness; a world of men whose womenfolk, hidden behind veils should they have to slip into the streets, live cloistered lives behind shuttered windows—obliges me to think of Karen Armstrong's thesis in *The battle for God* (2000). This thesis is founded on the premise that the three great monotheisms are responses to a supra-historical period, the agrarian age, in which age—the time of farming that ended the time of the hunter-gatherers—the mythological resolution of the new economy entailed primarily a God who rewarded a long, toiling, yet stationary, life for the 80 per cent who had to be peasants. This might well be Ibn 'Arabi's "God created in the faiths": the unsubtle, concretized God of "ordinary people" (Morris 2002, pp. 23–24). And then I think, well, now we are all in the other 20 per cent. We are all now the literate elite of before, and schools, willy nilly, are drawn into addressing this.

Thus, we see Abdul Ghafoor assisting students to become capable of God by turning them somewhat away from the package of what God is said to be for them. He is, perhaps necessarily, modest in his interventions—for his subject is highly sensitive in an Islamic school. But my subject, why, it is not even about this God, so nobody worries!

Whilst Abdul Ghafoor was talking with Aishe and her class I, with more immunity, was working with the class with Ismail and Khadijah Anne in it. Our topic was the analysis of language. I had been saying that back in the 1960s there was no such topic of study in English. Then we had "clear thinking." The assumption at that time was that we could arrive at some sort of truth in writing. But now that position is not even contemplated. Now, cued by advertisers, we are treating all writing as persuasion: it is all work in illusion.

Out of this highly relevant talk, it came naturally to ask my class what reality was. The first person said people were real. Yes, certainly. And yet, I suggested, when one

was sorting out a person's clothes after his death (I had my father in mind) the clothes seemed hauntingly more real than the person who had gone.

There were other interesting offers as I asked around the group, and so I came to Ismail. Ismail is a bit of an unknown quantity for me. His family is from Indonesia, but he himself seems sprung out of a rap dancing video clip on all-night weekend TV. He said the only reality we had was *The matrix*. I have seen the film, too: the idea is fantastic! Take out all the fabulous duelling fights, and what one has is the Buddhist vision of *maya*: the illusion that holds us. I worked this up a bit. Were we not all locked into at least two easily identifiable matrices? The first was the school timetable, which held us in every minute to place, company, and mental contents during the school days. ("The timetable even looks like the number matrix in the film!" I exclaimed, "There is just less of it!") The other obvious matrix was culture: we think we are free, but we are born into being Lebanese, or Turkish, or British; born into Islam or into post-Christian consumerism, or—as with these students—born into both.

Khadijah Anne did not like this. She protested. Khadijah Anne is the daughter of a convert. Perhaps the second name is from her Dad's mother. She is devout, intelligent, alert, and admirable.

"But we don't have to stay in the matrix!" she cried.

"How do you get out?" I asked.

She took a breath. Then she said, "By learning. By opening your mind!"

It was the educational cliché, uttered with urgency and freshness. If one trusts my testimony to the urgency and freshness, then this response of Khadijah Anne's entailed the following: acceptance of the plausibility of an inauthentic existence caught in ready-made imaginal forms; acceptance of the possibility that even her own culture might be able (however inadvertently) to short-sell her; and substantive acceptance of Ismail's case and mine not just because the logic prevailed, but because the logic was her own also. In addition to these things there is faith that life offers more, hope that it might come to her, and belief (different from the belief that is a commitment to wild stuff) that there is a way forward.

In broad definitions of ultimacy in feeling, experiencing, adventuring—and maybe like most young people—Khadijah Anne is seen here affirming something marvellous, rather than sealing off such ultimacies in a demonstration of "faith." This is in the genre of "capable of God."

Ibn 'Arabi is only specific about the nature of this God in two ways. The first is that this God is apprehended by one's fullest personhood. The second specific thing is that this God is *not* "the God created in the faiths."

Third Glimpses

> The temple which contains Me is your heart. (Corbin 1998, p. 279)

One can see why Ibn 'Arabi was brought to trial for atheism. That he was cleared is an imposing reflection on his self-defence, or perhaps the sophistication of

Islamic culture at that poised moment of serene ascendancy before the Mongol invasions.

The fact of the matter is that Islam had a problem with Allah, and still has. Not only is he far abstracted from humankind, but to venture to draw him near, or to explicate him, is to risk a charge of heresy of the worst kind: *shirk*, which translates as idolatry. Islam has, therefore, always frowned upon theology. The surprise for the outsider is to discover that the scholars of Islam are all experts on *sharia* and jurisprudence. There is law. God remains decidedly ineffable.

Ibn 'Arabi's *imaginal* teaching, as Corbin presents it, does not indeed (and this would have been the crux of his defence when he was brought to trial) violate the ineffableness of God. Instead its focus is upon how the individual knows God, and for each individual this is different. Thus this maxim: "the temple which contains Me is your heart." And thus knowing one's own heart is the beginning of being capable of God.

Can I say anything specific about what this encounter with the heart might entail for my students? I believe I can. Even without considering individual students (a consideration put into an English teacher's hands in every session and in every paper submitted for correction), there are commonalities of the personal formation of the students that are immediately striking. A couple of weeks prior to this present writing, my Year 12s came into class to read and discuss Arthur Miller's *A view from the bridge* (1961). In voices variously attempting the accents of New York, they recreated the domestic tensions of the play, tensions focusing upon masculine possessiveness over women and unbridled pride bent upon forcing resolutions. The play's critique of a Mediterranean culture that places male passion above the law could well be a critique also of the Arab endorsement of *ghirah*—of jealousy for one's women. Yet the readings, faltering over elements of novelty in Miller's prose (like "sump'm" and "yiz") but generally teenage and celebratory before abuse (like "son-of-a-bitch punk"), were smooth in achieving the tone of criticism.

This was the more remarkable as the class had just come from an assembly addressed by an imam. The address, to which the students attended with flat docility, might have been delivered whole and entire in AD 1200. The imam, in white prayer hat, began with a *hadith* about a woman in hell, "her meat" being eternally eaten by a cat, because of her cruelties to a cat during her earthly life. The burden of the address was that Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) loves all of the creatures he (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) has made. It was elaborated into a further *hadith* about the Prophet (*sala-allah alayhi wa sallam*) being distressed when he (and again, *sala-allah alayhi wa sallam*) came upon a weeping camel. It was hard to know what most characterized the talk: the coarseness of the glimpse into hell, the grave recitation of palpable fantasies, or the totalization—for sacred pronouns as well as the obligatory use with sacred proper names—of the worshipful extensions.

I presumed that the students must have found the imam's address as strange as I did. Here was something to ask Abdul Ghafoor about. Meanwhile I discovered, in a lately published diary of Joseph Campbell's, an interesting vocabulary for outlying parameters of the heart. Campbell, under a slow fan in a hotel in Bombay in 1954, drew up in his diary the following tabular analysis of the eastern psyche in comparison with the western (Campbell 2002, p. 144).

The orient	The occident
Terminus of the Neolithic	Growing point of the New World
Tradition (guru)	Revolution (hero)
Faithful obedience	Intelligent striving
The archetypes	The personal factor
Immutable law	Volition
Caste	Equality
Transformation of consciousness	Transformation of the world

As it happened, this time it was over the telephone that I put this breakdown to Abdul Ghafoor. I said, "If we were looking for the heart of these students of ours which column would guide us to it?"

Abdul had no hesitation. "Yes! Definitely! Our students are occidental." And then he supported his assertion by adverting to another classroom recollection. This story was from an Arabic session. The students were working with a passage of dialogue, in which a girl was sadly farewelling her brother, who was off to study abroad. The girl's sadness was only partly sorrow at losing her brother. She was sorry also for herself. She had ambitions to be a doctor, but this, her father had told her, was "inappropriate" for a girl.

The passage seemed to deliver this position innocent of the vigor of western rejection of anything being inappropriate for a girl. The passage had no dramatic irony. But Abdul Ghafoor's class objected, or at least several of the girls did. It was "sexist" they exclaimed. One in particular, Yasmin, was strident: it was all fiddle faddle! Of course a girl could be a doctor! Of course it was appropriate!

Abdul remembered also that this student had been present at the recent parent–teacher interviews. Her mother was trying to encourage her to keep up her Arabic in the following year. "But Yasmin said, 'No. I don't want to.' " Then Abdul, at the other end of the line, added, "There's volition!"

"And you, Abdul," I asked. "Where are you with respect to that Campbell analysis? Are you oriental or occidental?"

The answer of this Maldivian man, who came to the West to be free from tyranny—free of the intrusion of authority upon his own thinking—struck me greatly, and underlined his perceptions of the students we teach here in our Australian Islamic school. "Oh, I came here when I was already past 30. One grows up in one's traditions. They are in the blood. One could only get rid of them by getting rid of one's blood."

I suppose the symbol of the blood is near to the symbol of the heart. Insofar as the blood of our students is near to their hearts, their hearts contain the spiritual adventure of the occident. To this degree, their Lord, the one to be found there in the temple of the heart, the spiritual *Kaaba*, is occidental, too.

The Pilgrims Arrive

O marvel! a garden among the flames…
My heart has become capable of all forms.

> It is a meadow for gazelles and a monastery for Christian monks,
> A temple for idols and a pilgrim's Ka'aba. (Corbin 1998, p. 135)

It was the beginning of the day when everyone was congregating in the staff-room. A hubbub of hellos and morning gossip! But Abdul Ghafoor and I, dispensing preliminaries, had got straight into things. First there were some splendid lines from a poem by another Sufi—by Hafiz—which I thrust upon him, and he agreed that they well addressed the perspective put in this paper. The Hafiz lines are a protest that is applicable to too much of schooling:

> Why
> Just ask the donkey in me
> To speak to the donkey in you? (Ladinsky 1999, p. 36)

This was a good start, and now I pressed Abdul Ghafoor to tell me, over his morning mug, in what way his teaching of "Texts and Traditions" entailed not just the fact of imaginal material but a real courting of mythopoesis and mythopoetic transformation. How was his teaching about the heart becoming "capable of all forms"? He made it worth my trouble.

His subject, "Texts and Traditions," has only recently been taken on by Islamic schools in Victoria. The very name of the subject is humanistic, implying an even-handed symbiosis between sacred text and cultural formation. This had to be addressed before Muslim schools could develop studies under its banner. Some subtle changes were thereupon made that removed the suggestion that the divine text might have originated in human tradition.

What Abdul Ghafoor went on to tell me was something elusively simple and surprising powerful. Yes, all the time, the students' imaginations had to shift, and to reconceive. This he explained was most potently and recurrently evident in the preparation for examinations. The well-argued essay is the instrument of the transformation, and it has this instrumentality precisely because the students can not produce one until they have overcome specific difficulties within themselves.

"We are used to believing in our own realities," he said (leaning over the arm of his chair, the steaming mug in both hands), "realities from home and from the community, but the argument of the essay has to come out of another reality." I needed a concrete example.

The example concerned the Yawm al Qiyamah—the Day of Resurrection and Judgement. Every Muslim has a vivid idea of this. "But when the students write, they first have to detach themselves from their own text. Personal pronouns have to go. The statement has to stand alone. And then, when they write they have to allow that the examiner may not share their belief, and so it must be written with that courtesy that allows for difference."

Abdul then came to a third substantive point. This concerned the imaginal zone quite directly: religious texts often address matters that are known as *ghaybiyyat*—"beyond perception." The student has to learn to see that the images carried in the mind may not even be carried by the sacred text, but then, even if they might be, they are necessarily metaphors for things that, by definition, we cannot perceive. What are we to understand by paradise, for example, as a "garden"?

Abdul here, imagining his students before him, raised a finger and admonished the air: “Now, it is for you to think!”

And this thinking, demanded by the discipline and etiquette of the essay, as much as by coming before a body of knowledge as a student, is work directly with conception and reconception in the imaginary realm.

I, too, found a story. I imposed it upon Abdul Ghafoor one lunchtime. With the Year 11 group, I had spent a session writing, reading, and talking. The task was to write 100 words in response to a question on the Medea of Euripides. The question was whether she had gone too far. On the face of it, an angry woman who murders a king, a princess, and her own children besides, might well seem to have gone too far by anybody’s reckoning. I wanted to see how well my class had listened to the commentaries I had made on the “feminist” theme in Euripides, and upon the “magical consciousness” of Medea.

The exercise, completed by reading around, and the ensuing discussion of responses, revealed that one student had integrated everything—this was Khadijah Anne, mentioned above. Most of the others were completely literal in their responses, and, yes, Medea was a monstrous person who had over-shot the mark in her every judgement! It is a view that leaves the play without meaning, and Euripides’ championing of her as utterly baffling. But a few other students, perhaps acquainted with the painfulness of migration and exile, sensed a deeper motive: Zaynab, for example, whose white hijab makes her brown eyes startling and communicative, had been able in her writing—though she did not move beyond images to a reason—to pile up emotionally toned phrases related to exile, and to a far homeland where the terms of human interaction were different from Jason’s logically driven Hellas.

In my response to Zaynab I suggested a reason. I drew it from the notorious account in *Newsweek* magazine of rioting and fury in Afghanistan over the desecration of the Koran at Guantanamo Bay.

> In Afghanistan, and a few other places belonging to the heartland of Islam, the sunnah is the form of life for just about everyone. Your own living the sunnah in Australia tends to be a personal choice, but there it is not an option. There it is simply what life means. The desecration of the Koran is there a cause for the sort of anger that belongs to a violation of a way of life near to God: divine anger. This is Medea’s sort of anger. Medea, grandchild of Helios, is not human in response to her wounding. The injury Jason has inflicted upon her is an injury to a god, an injury against a primal force.

Sometimes no one listens. But the listening this time, focused on current agonies in their own cultural world, was intense. Zaynab in particular, her dark brown eyes wide and round, was with me.

I went on:

> Here in Australia it is different. Here if we are injured in our sensibilities, we tend to ask, amid our anger, where the other person is coming from. We are used to cultural difference. We have grown up mindful of it. Medea had lived in a magical universe before Jason and his Argonauts interrupted her life. It was a Dreaming universe she lived in—like the Dreaming of the Aborigines. A magical universe near to her gods. This is still possible in Afghanistan. But Muslim or not, here in Australia, the magical universes have retreated. The enchantments have withdrawn. We are with Jason.

Abdul Ghafoor, I should parenthetically note, agreed with the tenor of these statements. He was careful, however, to indicate that fury in the real Afghanistan had plenty of reasons besides that of my simple accounting. Any spark in that tense land of conflict, and of resentment of America, will do.

In these two stories, the one from Abdul Ghafoor and the other from me, we can see how imaginal transformation can be continuously in process in a school. In Abdul's story it belongs to the process of deconstruction and reconstruction. In mine it lies in the entailments of migration: the children of our Muslim community, born in Australia, are ingesting what it means to be Muslim and western.

Both of these accounts show teaching directly relevant to "good outcomes." In Abdul's teaching generally, as he tells me, he tends to be conservative and move toward the examinations, but we see him here conceiving of this work in terms of the surrender of, and/or revisualization of, imaginal content. In my account of a session of teaching, anyone could see that I draw a lot of energy from elements beyond the purview of the examination. Part of my excitement after the class outlined was the accuracy and the plausibility of the presentation of the idea of magical consciousness. Part of it was the appropriateness—the Medea is readily conceivable in these very "imaginal" terms. But another part was danger. Without being the enemy of the students, or of their faith, and without them thinking of me as such, I had brought before them the idea that their parents' migration to Australia was a migration away from domains in the mind as much as from political and ethnic domains: that in terms of ideas their journey to where I am is fuller than they might have imagined.

For several days after that class, I still saw Zaynab listening, and my reading of her face in my memory was as secure as my reading of my wife's face when she is fond of me at a dinner out.

Consummations

> Enter into the Temple with me. (Corbin 1998, p. 280)

Our conversations thus far serve to show that the commonplace realm of the imaginative constructions of human reality is everyday subject material in discussions school teachers have with their students. Within this realm of image and human urgency lies maybe all that we are able to mean by "God"—and our journeying in this realm, or the way in which the heart lives within this realm, involves what is meant by faith. Phrased in secular terms we might say that the realm defined by psychological imperatives, by the categories of the psychically possible, and the interplay of cultural imaginative construction with the aspirations of the individual, is the everyday fare of humanities classes in schools. What to do about this, or what might be both wise and useful in view of this, has not really been addressed. Where, in short, does it go?

It is important to put aside any sense of peripherality about this discussion, as if it is all curiosity belonging to the Muslim nature of our school. The Islamic

exemplification is irrelevant. It is necessary not to see this curiosity as the subject. Islam merely accords our subject a fascinating profile. What is relevant is that the realm of the exosomatic imaginal, of human ghost, is established as a cardinal concern of schools. So what then?

Of first importance in the thought of Corbin's Ibn 'Arabi is the understanding that the knower and the known are not separable in this realm of imaginal realities. Our reading of the "Night Journey" gave this idea the same prominence:

> The servant remains God and not-God. (Morris 2002, p. 19)
> There is no Name that God has applied to Himself that He has not also applied to us. (Morris 2002, p. 21)

"God" was meaningful because it designated those elaborations of mind in which humanity—even "ordinary" humanity—discovers what humanity is for itself. Though he was conscious of being a member of a literate elite, and even of being himself uniquely sensitive, Ibn 'Arabi did not exclude "ordinary people" from the significance of this perception. "Now you should know," he writes, again in his Night Journey study, "that there is no difference with regard to this journey between ordinary people and the person distinguished by this way and this characteristic" (Morris 2002, p. 23). By "this way" he means persons who are mystics and saints, like himself. We all—witness our immersions in TV and movies!—live on the plane of fancy and idealization.

There is no difference between person and person, except that individuals and groups can be ignorant of what is happening, except that abuses can happen, except that we can stop at the first object and stay there for good. The "God created in the faith" is such an object. We are all travelers on the imaginal plane, we all wander in the mythopoetic zone, but whilst the many do not know they are travelers there, whilst they are "making up likenesses of God" (Morris 2002, p. 24)—engaging in idolatry!—the mystic or the saint is able, by knowing, to "polish the mirror of his soul" (Morris 2002, p. 23).

Ibn 'Arabi developed to its logical end point this idea of seeing God in the mirror of one's own soul: the God to be found on the imaginal plane is, one might say, oneself. This culmination of self involves finding a one and only, a soul mate, a lover's beloved. A syzygetic idea of conjugation, of paired, coupled celestial realities is at the core of Ibn 'Arabi's theology. It is fundamental, in particular, to his conception of the act of creation. Here the essential motif is not, as Corbin phrases it, "the bursting into being of an autarchic Omnipotence," but "a fundamental sadness." "I was a hidden Treasure"—so one *hadith qudsi* puts it—"I longed to be known" (Corbin 1998, p. 184).

It is in our ability to know, to know all the names, all the pertinent names, all the names for us, that God is found. Ibn 'Arabi's conception declares the curriculum.

It has always struck me as being a peculiarity of schooling that it provides the major stimulus for the first steps of our intellectual maturity, and yet the testing systems devised by the educators are susceptible of distortions that can make this most significant outcome almost irrelevant: the great journey to fullness of understanding, and command of our world, is, for most people, via bell-curved,

statistically determined outcomes—an experience in learning how to be excluded. That is a first distortion: we marvel at every kitten and puppy, but find the minds of only 10 students out of 500 remarkable. A second distortion is that we cannot wait upon the process within our students: everything is hurried, and it is a hurrying facilitated by depriving knowledge of its living subjectivity. Knowledge is unitized, concretized, and dot-pointized. It is bounded by pre-tests and post-tests, and, to assist objective assessment, tabular breakdowns of merit have been developed for every subject. It is in the analytic aggregate that excellence is to be found, rather than in living wholes. A third distortion pushes toward Ibn 'Arabi's enhanced understanding of *shirk*, of idolatry: instead of being a voyage, a journey, through ways of conceiving the real, it becomes a tourist circuit of fixed objects that one "does."

For Ibn 'Arabi, what one could know was ultimately an alter ego; an alter ego in whom we discover our own becoming. Of the metaphors that give visuality to this alter ego, the beloved is perhaps—from the poems of Rumi—most familiar. It is also called our angel. It is called, as well, our "divine name"; the aspect of God that we are able to apprehend. It is God made personal, and the word Ibn 'Arabi uses for this is *Rabb*, or Lord. Our Lord participates in the ultimacy of God, of Allah—but this latter "designation," Allah, points beyond all that can be apprehended: here we have the Hubble telescope peering into the very abyss of time and meaning. One's Lord, our *Rabb*, however, is the angel face God turns to us so that he can be known: it is what "we can bear" of God.

Here is the secret of the bliss of your cat lying on the terrace pavement: it has found the feline name of God! Here is the reason why the school student is characterized through the centuries, and no less now than before, as po-faced: the miserable demeanor portrays alienation from the angel other. When the student's subjectivity falls short of objectified criteria and concrete outcomes, there is no angel. Instead of an education taking place, something more like a crime against humanity is committed.

An address of the entailments of this perspective in impractical ways might seem more straightforward than one in practical terms. The rhetoric of schools today focuses upon the individual and his or her future, but the energy behind schools is the state and the future of the state. In particular, in western democracies, education is about the economy. At the governmental level, urgencies of economy drive funding arrangements. It is not for the individual that young people are conscripted to school; that the constraint of classrooms is the architectural instrument of learning; that unnatural orderliness must reign; that talking can still be a punishable offence; that every school juggles student numbers against teacher costs. With the dismantling of the so-called "nanny state" and the handing of legitimacy to private schools, this focus on state and economy has been deepened. Under the liberal banner of "choice", the state maintains benchmarking control but, at the expense of a distanced moral authority, lessens its financial burden. All these things are evident to everyone who thinks about it, yet it is deemed quixotic for educators to say that the entire system is astray and to fancy altering the whole world. Despite this, every education course keeps its trainees starry-eyed upon the

writings of the Quixotes: people like Johann Pestalozzi and Maria Montessori, A. S. Neill and Paulo Freire.

There are practical things, however, that schools and teachers can do. There are ways they can fall into resonance with these things of value in the work of Ibn ‘Arabi. In our own schools and classrooms it is in our power to enhance the chances that our students might indeed find that their education is a part of their great journey. Let Abdul Ghafoor and me suggest three categorically different orders of possible things.

A first is to maintain, for our students, a critique of at least some gods “created in the faith.” Candidate deities, in school contexts, are school conceptions of “excellence,” a school’s overt hierarchy of power, and a school’s projected conception of its corporate self. No students should feel that they are nothing in contrast to a school that is real. Teachers can enable ironic space in the face, for instance, of examination results, which annihilate and ordinarify, as well as aggrandize. A second category of the possible is exemplified in the case studies given here in the study of religious and literary texts: it is to ensure that evidently subjective knowledge, or forms of knowledge with evident subjective dimensions, are never taught objectively. We are “God and not-God”: in reading Gatsby, just as in studying the *Miraj*, the Night Journey of the Prophet, the students are learning about their own selves, and have prerogatives to be honored and understandings to be sought. A third category of the possible involves teacher attitude: we must teach—prepare lessons, mark papers, engage in dialogue—in ways that promise the inherent value of learning, not the dead achievement. What transpires in our classes is bigger than the system, and our students must always feel this. Despite the rules, the uniforms, the corporate lies, the imperious judgements—and all the things that create fear in the belly for a school student—our own classes can become places where the adventure of life opens to its grandeur.

“Come into the temple with me”? The temple—the mystical *Kaaba*—is one’s own heart. And who says “come in with me”? This is our own ideal self, the self that is above the mass-managing convenience of our systems; the self in which, alone, all splendor culminates.

Abdul Ghafoor, in his hands a microwaved bowl of Fantastic Noodles and a spoon, is talking to me in the staffroom. He talks about his daughter, just beginning secondary school. “She isn’t like we were,” he tells me, his eyes darkly brilliant. “She is growing up differently.” He goes on to exemplify this remark: she manifests, he says, Campbell’s “volition.” When I ask for more he goes on to tell me that she is completely sure of herself and what she wants. Then, making a joke of it, “You might say she is well on her way to becoming a feminist!”

Abdul’s pleasure in his daughter is curious for being unsentimental. At some level he is really talking about himself and the meaning of his coming to Australia. I think of that line from our mediaeval sheikh’s poem, “My heart has become capable of all forms”: this is the audacity of Ibn ‘Arabi’s writing that Abdul Ghafoor liked best in these conversations we have had together.

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Chapter 11
Idealism and Materialism in the Culture of Teacher Education: The Mythopoetic Significance of Things

Rod Fawns

Abstract The culture of faculties of education has been transformed in the last thirty years. In teacher education we still operate on construction sites at the intersection between symbolic forms and material necessities of schooling. While teacher education remains both intimate and technical, the material necessities have been themselves reduced to, or reified to, symbolic forms. The argument in this chapter is that at this time the rehabilitation of the cultural significance of "things" in our representation of teaching is central to any re-imagining of curriculum and learning. Such a mythopoetic turn in research and teaching may help students who feel they are failing the cultural agency of teaching and those, including ourselves in teacher education, who would assist them.

The Lived Curriculum of a Teacher

I teach a class to senior postgraduate students in the Education Faculty at the University of Melbourne who have an interest in the whole-school curriculum and the position of the curriculum coordinator in the school hierarchy. Last year I introduced myself and my postgraduate subject "Curriculum Coordination—Theory and Practice": "I know this may sound far-fetched but if I were asked by a student in my school biology class 'What is our big brain for?', I would probably say, after reading Bruce Chatwin's *Songlines*, 'It's for singing our way through the wilderness.' "

Chatwin's (1990) narrative account of his conversations about Aboriginal songlines and how they work is now integral to the way I see myself as Australian. His narrative hypothesis is that each totemic ancestor in Aboriginal culture, while traveling through the country, was thought to have scattered a trail of words and musical notes along the line of his footprints—a songline. These dreaming tracks lie over the land as "ways" of communication between the most far-flung tribes.

The following is my paraphrase of Chatwin's discussions with Arkady, a Russian Australian who was mapping the sacred sites in order to build a railway. "A song," Arkady explained, "is both map and direction finder. Providing you know the song, you could always find your way across country."

T. Leonard, P. Willis (eds.), *Pedagogies of the Imagination,*

"And would a man on walkabout always be traveling down one of the songlines?," Chatwin asked.

"In the old days, yes. Nowadays, they go by train or car."

"Suppose the man strayed from his songline?"

"He was trespassing. He might get speared for it."

"But as long as he stuck to the track, he'd always find people who shared his dreaming?"

"In theory, at least, the whole of Australia could be read as a musical score. There was hardly a prominent rock or creek in the country that could not or had not been sung."

"The songlines could be visualized as a spaghetti of Iliads and Odesseys, in which every episode was readable in terms of geology".

"By episode, you mean 'sacred site.' " (Chatwin 1990, p. 13)

On walkabout they tread the footprints of their ancestors and sing the stanzas without changing a word or note—and so recreate the creation.

"Sometimes," Arkady said, "I'll be driving my old men through the desert, and we'll come to a ridge of sand hills, and suddenly they'll all start singing. 'What are you mob singing?' I'll ask, and they'll say, 'Singing up the country. Makes the country come up quicker.'" (Chatwin 1990, p. 58)

By singing the world into existence the ancestors had been poets in the original sense of poesis, meaning creation. The land must first exist as a concept in the mind. Then it must be sung. Only then can it be said to exist.

I explained to my class that Chatwin is convinced that the nomads were the crank handle of history. The nomadic state is the natural human condition and life in cities for him is a form of captivity.

I pointed to the strong references I found in Chatwin's writing to what sustains good teaching or curriculum. A sense of place is a conceptual place where our tjuringa, or message stick, is stored, which connects us to the ancestor. Cultural survival, self-knowledge, rooted in a sense of place, is a foundation of life. The subject discipline for secondary teachers, or the age group of the children for primary teachers, must be rooted in a sense of time and place. Biology or being eight is an iconic or mythological place we must explore jointly with students.

Chatwin's quest leads him to tragic encounters with many people in northern Australia who are living on the edge of society in alcohol and racism. In our quest as teacher-guides, it is a new and old country that we must understand in deliberations on the curriculum in a school.

Curriculum work guides the re-culturing of schools and universities. Curriculum problems have to be first appreciated and then identified before a solution can be described. Often the first steps are assumed. The re-culturing requires sustained deliberation: judgment in relation to existing rules, imagination in keeping windows of opportunity open, negotiating the relations between vision and voice, trust in people and trust in processes, structures, and agency. But above all, those deliberating must feel what Joseph Schwab (1969, p. 173) called "the pinch of the problem." How are such institutional deliberations to be supported and conflicts managed? We can cross to safety, sustain inquiry, only by embracing our and others' songlines seeking a shared horizon.

I led a discussion of the *Songlines* thesis before inviting the senior teachers in my class to articulate their lived curriculum through a book they felt spoke strongly to them about teaching and curriculum work. I did this also to introduce a non-instrumental view of curriculum and its management. I attempt to illustrate this in exemplary pieces of published reflection. Tim Leonard's (1983) biographical exploration of his lived curriculum illuminated for me the myth and mystery of academic authority in curriculum deliberation in secondary education and teacher education. His distillation of commonplace rules for improving curriculum dialogue in an emergent community of knowledgeable, committed men and women frames our class discussions. Jamie Bradbeer (1998), also in biographical mode, explored the intimate imaginal worlds of teachers in a local school setting, importantly revealing the operating curriculum in schools and universities to be the lived curriculum or songline of the teacher. My postgraduate students are encouraged to write about their teaching as a songline as both a personal journey narrative and a quest for cultural meaning in a community of discursive practice. There is much philosophical rough ground (Dunne 1993) to be crossed here firstly to rescue the person in the psychology of current teacher education and secondly to rescue the mythopoetic status of the subject discipline in the secondary school or the child at a particular age in primary school teaching practice (Fawns 1980).

In the often yawning gap between my hopes and persistent failures in the daily grind of teacher education, particularly in science education over thirty years, another breakthrough in my thinking occurred when I read Martha Nussbaum's *The fragility of goodness* (1986). She argues in a manner consistent with both Leonard and Bradbeer that in the western philosophical tradition virtue and goodness are collapsed into the rational function of the human mind. The Greek tragedians, she suggests, offer a counter tradition in which they take a dimmer—and perhaps more realistic—view of the power of human reason in that they acknowledged the uncontrollable and inescapable nature of fate or chance as a seemingly irrational force in human lives. Rather than suggesting that human reason, detached and focused on the ideal, can redeem humanity, the tragedians portrayed the detached, human character as guilty of hubris, a tragic and fatal flaw. They made the case that the truly virtuous must recognize and consciously live with human vulnerability, with the essential fragility of mortal existence. I extend Nussbaum's argument into the world of teacher education where ideals and vulnerabilities abound. Educators bring the particular circumstances of their private lives to their work, including their vulnerabilities, which influence the ways they perceive and live their professional lives. Do we create a moral order in schools by producing a checklist of learning outcomes characterized as ethical practices and holding teachers accountable to it? Or do we create a moral order by helping teachers to discover and articulate what about their practice either reflects or confounds their original ideal that brought them into teaching? I would argue that it is in the awful gap between the teacher's ideal and present practice that curriculum development and teacher education can construct a bridge of meaning and hope.

In positing agency in myself and my students as curriculum coordinators, the internal dialectic that links the self-as-product and the self-as-process must be given

full explication. The capacity to regulate moments in selfhood presupposes that the dispositional powers of the self-as-process must effectively remain outside the totalizing system even as individual biography and institutional exigency constrict its freedom. I encourage class members to offer a more detailed analysis of the culture and their umwelten, reflecting on their historically accessible resources and the "golden cages of their own biographies" (Simmell 1990, p. 43). This involves the students getting a hand on cultural shifts in both the changes in the "structure of feeling" (Williams 1961, p. 121) in their analyses of different periods of curriculum "reform" and their "sense of place" (Pred 1983, p. 45) in the local moral order or moral geography of the school and for me the Education Faculty.

The Shifting Balance in the Culture of Education

While the tension between the controlling functions of "status" and "utility" appears to continuously redefine the professional cultures of teaching and teacher education, Andreas Reckwitz (2002), a German sociologist, argues that in the past several decades social theory has been transformed largely into cultural theory. In different theoretical branches, the social has been redefined as the cultural. Structuralism, semiotics and post-structuralism, phenomenology and hermeneutics, Wittgenstein's language-game philosophy, and symbolic interactionism have, in diverse ways, furthered a perspective that understands the orderliness of the social world as a result of symbolic structures. In contrast the classical types of social theories such as naturalism, utilitarianism or the social being of the norm-following actor, and theories of culture can be defined as vocabularies that understand or explain human action and social order by establishing their basis in symbolic codes and schemes that regulate meaning. Reckwitz argues that the classical dualisms of modern thought between "idealism" and "materialism," between the realm of the "ideal" and that of the "real" appear to have been resolved in favor of the former elements. I extend this apparent resolution of the argument (Dow 1989; Fawns 2005) between the culture of the symbolic and the factualism of material practices into teacher education. Dow, writing about an early school-based teacher education program, to which she and I were both committed, argued that within the cultural–material distinction the material practices were seen within the academic faculty to function as the "supplement," as the element "added" to the something already complete in itself: to education as culture.

Reckwitz argues that this is a superficial analysis. Cultural theorists, he proposes, have always taken considerable trouble to answer the question of where to place the material in relation to the symbolic. He asks, what is the status of the "material" dimension and how is it defined within the vocabularies of these theories of educational culture? Extending Reckwitz's argument, it seems that the idea of "materiality" does not have a common meaning amongst theorists of educational culture, but that within these vocabularies it rather occupies the place of the "non-cultural," which is conceptualized in diverse ways. Although I will not be canvassing

these changes in detail here, I can see that we could learn a great deal by following the shift in place and significance of the "material" within them. Reckwitz distinguishes amongst three phases in the development of theories of culture that differ in their placement of the "material":

1. A phase dominated by the sociology of knowledge as formulated by classical sociology and behavioral psychology. This can be associated with the causal power attributed to formulations of social class, knowledge communities, and to role theory. In teacher education the struggles were amongst competing social functions of education.
2. A phase dominated by "high modern" cultural theory as we find it in different versions of structuralism and social phenomenology—two versions of cultural mentalism, in post-structuralist and constructivist "textualism" and "inter-subjectivism." In teacher education the struggles here can be seen to have been amongst various individualist cognitive/curricular models.
3. A phase dominated by "practice theory." In teacher education the challenge here is to delineate a new social ontology, a site ontology that depicts the social as a mesh of human practices and material arrangements, and eludes two pervasive criticisms, that of incompleteness directed at individualism and that of reification levelled at societism.

An extension of Reckwitz's argument suggests that in the third phase cultural theory applied to teacher education may be capable of clarifying the relationship between the cultural and material in a way that is neither "culturalist" nor "materialist." This capacity is connected with the development of "theories of social practices" within the culturalist camp of teacher education. A similar position seems to have been reached in Fensham's (2004) quest for an identity for science education as a field—to overcome the schism between intellectual autonomy and moral agency that has characterized curriculum debate in that field.

My argument pursues the following line in teacher education:

1. Classical sociology of knowledge understands the material as "social structures" like "social class" or "academic communities" located outside but providing a foundation for orders of knowledge. This approach emerges as a culturalist-materialist "double."
2. We can understand the different branches of high-modern culturalism that understands orderliness in society and schools as a result of symbolic structures as a reaction against the insufficiencies of the classical vocabulary, which still seeks social foundations outside culture. High-modern culturalism redefines the material as "objects of knowledge" or "symbolic objects," as objects that become visible, are revealed, in the context of systems of meaning (categories, discourse, communicative action). In the cultural theories of education in the last decades, this conceptualization of the material has been the dominant one.
3. An instructive novel conception of materiality within teacher education (including science education) would critique the reduction of social order to dematerialized symbolic orders and of the material to objects of interpretation. It would

enable one to grasp the material not as a social structure or symbolic objects, but as "artefacts," as "things" that are necessary components of social networks or "practices" in emergent professional identity formation (Fawns 2005).

The Material as "Artefacts" and as Integral Components of Practices: The Quest for a Symmetric Anthropology

Theodore Schatzki (1996), after Bernard Latour, Rom Harre (2002) (a long-standing advocate of agency explanations of psychological phenomena), and others, such as Bhaskar, Bourdieu, and Giddens, has attempted to frame a systematic presentation of material objects in social worlds, a "theory of social practices," which I think can help us explore the cultural mysteries and myths of curriculum and of teaching as lived experience.

Teacher education does have an alternative to "high-modern culturalism" and its understanding of "materiality" as "objects of knowledge," without falling back on to the old idealism–materialism and subjectivism–objectivism dualities. Beside Latour (1993), who is indebted to the sociology and anthropology of science, in the wake of Kuhn's (1996, p. 15) culturalist perspective on "normal science" and of ethnomethodology, there have been a number of attempts to reconceptualize the social significance of objects as artefacts. However Latour's approach to what he calls a "symmetric anthropology" provides more than an attempt to offer a novel and more adequate perspective on the innumerable phenomena of modern science and technology and their social effects. His symmetric anthropology can be understood in terms of "artefacts" or "things" that necessarily participate in social practices just as humans do. These things are "interpreted" in different ways by the human agents as affordances (Windsor 2000), but at the same time they are applied, used, and must be handled within their materiality. As things they are not interchangeable. For instance without the specific materiality of a ticker-timer, one internationally accepted approach to teaching the Newtonian theory of motion would not be possible: the ticker-timer cannot be replaced by some other arbitrary "symbolic object," such as an equation of motion $v = u + at$, and the same meaning ascribed. The social scientist and the teacher cannot confine themselves to the analysis of "cultures." Rather, networks of human beings, of artefacts and their regulated relationships to one another, form historically specific "natures-cultures." For Latour this rehabilitation of the material world in the form of artefacts, integrated in social practices, amounts to a novel concept of the "collectivity" and to a dissolution of the micro–macro distinction in modern social theory. The stability of "human" social orders beyond particular contexts of action can be properly understood only when one regards practices not merely as constellations of intersubjectivity, but also as constellations of "interobjectivities" (Latour 1996). In practices, material things are routinely drawn upon and applied by different agents in different situations. The objects again and again endure, thus making social reproduction beyond temporal and spatial limits possible. They potentially dissolve the distinction

between micro-interactions and macrostructures in educational theory and practice.

The Practice Turn in Cultural Studies

Latour's ideas situate him in the broad stream of recent cultural theories that can be described as "theories of social practices." More systematic conceptualizations can be found in different versions in the work of Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1984), and in significant but sketchier versions in Garfinkel (1984), Harre (1997), and Butler (1990). Schatzki's *Social practices* (1996) and a subsequent body of work (1997, 2000; Schatzki et al., 2001) offers the most comprehensive social-philosophical formulation of what he describes as the practice turn in research. Practice theories provide an alternative attempt within cultural theory to overcome the model of the subject or mind as locus of the social and knowledge.

According to Schatzki, the proper site of the social is not collective mind but social practices. A social practice is a regular bodily activity held together by a socially standardized way of understanding and knowing. A social practice of *x*-ing (cooking, excusing, researching, teaching, arguing, etc.) is then "a temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings" (Schatzki 1996, p. 89), "organized" by a socially typical "understanding of *x*-ing" above all including practical knowledge. Schatzki criticizes all attempts to reduce social practices to discursive practices. But he does not demand we choose materiality over discourse. He along with many others (Pujol and Montenegro 1999) now reject the segregation. Doings and sayings, he argues, cannot be conceptualized as mental competences or as sequences of signs, but present themselves first and foremost in certain regular bodily activities. To form a socially conventionalized "intelligible" practice, however, these bodily activities need to be "organized" by knowledge. This knowledge is necessarily expressed in bodily activities: "Mind … is the expressed body" (Schatzki 1996, p. 53).

If "social fields" such as teacher education or "institutions" such as schools are nexuses and sequences of social practices, the "symbolic orders" that are highlighted by cultural theorists in education become forms of practical understanding that organize practices. For practice theory, the smallest unit of social analysis of time and place is not found in qualities of the "teacher." The decentering of the subject is carried out in a form different from textualism or intersubjectivism. Places in teaching "are anchored in objects which are combined into settings" (Schatzki 1996, p. 189). The things handled in teaching must be treated as necessary components for a practice to be "practised." Both the teacher body/mind and the artefacts provide requirements or components necessary but not sufficient to a practice. Certain things act as "resources" that enable and constrain the specificity of a practice. In Giddens's conceptual framework "the material" appears as "resources," which are interpreted as necessary requirements for the existence of practices. Giddens's rule-resource structures, however, are primarily understood as

allocative or authoritative means of power, less as things/artefacts to be handled (Giddens 1984, pp. 58–62). The organization of a practice also has a teleo-affective structure or effect associated with the practical intelligence associated with the doing of it. Media in the hands of the teacher are not mere instruments to "transmit" messages, but can mould forms of perception and communication. Social change is thus more than exclusively a change of cultural codes in education from say cognitive psychology to social psychology, but depends also on a change of technical media. Yet in order to have effects, artefacts must be used; and to be used, they must be intelligible to actors and be treated with understanding and within the parameters of cultural codes—they must become an integral part of a social practice. Schatzki (2000) and Harvey (2002) emphasize that the relationship between human agents and things to be handled presupposes a practical understanding. When teachers, in practice communities, have developed new forms of local know-how concerning certain things, these things "materialize" or "incorporate" this knowledge *within the practice*. This is the power in rituals; they are practices that define and embody collective belief or commitment. Things are "materialized understanding," and only as materialized understanding can they act as resources.

Practice theories, Reckwitz (2002) argues, follow other types of cultural theory in proceeding from the assumption that social order is formed in the crucible of cognitive-symbolic relations. But these cognitive-symbolic relations can now be conceptualized as practical understanding. This practical understanding extended to teaching is incorporated in active bodies and simultaneously materialized in artefacts. The materiality influences, but does not determine, which practical understanding and which social practices are possible in the classroom. In the form of things handled by the teacher and students, the teaching resources are more than a matrix of symbols, but less than a "basis" for a cultural "superstructure" for teacher education. If social change afforded through education is a change of complexes of social practices, it presupposes not only a transformation of cultural codes and of the bodies/minds of human subjects, but also a transformation of artefacts, a relationship that many of my students have been studying. The proposal that "associations" are not made in the head, but are due to our relationship to a particular environment in which events are lawfully related, and hence predictable (Gibson 1966, pp. 271–273), is just as pertinent for human-made objects and events as it is for natural ones.

Teaching Resources Have Relational Properties in Which Communicability Is Important

Redman (2005), Watkinson (2004), and James (2005) have explored how objects can be transformed and transform social worlds in different educational sites. The artefacts in the form of particular software for teaching space science in primary schools, computer networks in English departments in academic secondary schools, and dot drawings generated by young children to represent the particle behavior of

matter, each acquire a degree of interactive autonomy in the doings and sayings of teachers and pupils. They have a function in both social maintenance and expression in Harre's (2002) local moral order. In each study they show that the contemporary discourse of curriculum reform or reculturing in schools in which the teacher actors were engaged is propelled by a specific configuration of historical conditions to a level of symbolic intensity—social projective or self-presentational—that unequivocally supersedes conventional understandings of objectivity and redefines subjectivity. Redman and Watkinson showed how computer technology acquires a potential to secrete meanings and moods, and to set the tone and direction of teaching and learning as social practice, circumstance, or setting.

Speaking generally, the artefacts become subjectified objects that afford layers of professional meaning and significance and undertake symbolic and actual confrontations that have never been intended or even conceived by their creators.

The other side of this is the reciprocal objectification of subjects. Teachers, in shaping or resisting the interactive character of the new technologies, concede something of their own sense of their absolute autonomy. Teachers and their pupils in Redman's study responded differently to the new possibilities or tensions sensed in themselves becoming accessories in the life world of things. The teacher and pupil subjects in these studies each endure the world in the form of a curriculum. For most of the teachers there was too much unwelcome external pressure to use computers to change their teaching. For the pupils too few opportunities were afforded to engage with school computers. Both are informally sanctioned by the world to exist in a certain way (Mead 1934; Harre 1997).

A common teachers' perception, in Watkinson's and Redman's studies, was of a social reality that imposed or assigned meaning over a semiotically neutral material world detached from cultural meaning, which includes them. This justified their passive if futile resistance to the introduction of the new technologies. The researchers found that in educational research often the meaning-bearing impact of artefacts in practices (like the impact of a sacred site in a songline) was neglected. Instead artefacts were developed and used particularly in research into science teaching to formally demonstrate or visualize mental categories or theoretical constructs. They felt they should, as teachers and researchers, explore perspectual realities and lay emphasis on an unformulated level of meaning of things, not merely the concealed aspect of explicit meaning. Methodological guidelines must emphasize neither subjective proximity nor objective distance, but the subjective desire to overcome the difference from the object of research, the teaching resource at hand.

There is in artefacts, like Redman's website and the children's dot drawings in James's study, an inalienably active and productive significance that is not dependent on formalized meaning. There is a surplus of meaning, a mythopoetic meaning in things that should be explored. The conventional research perspective is unable to make the transition from dualist analytic categories of subject and object to the familiar complexity of a surrounding world of teacher education practice. Within the perspective of practice theory meaningful teacher education is formed and renewed primarily in forms of existence; before becoming crystallized in semantic structures, it comes about as existential practices or styles of relating to things and persons.

Treating the culture of teacher education as a text that may require orthographic adjustments by the students is rather naive and ultimately ineffective. On the other hand those of us inclined to fine-tune the quasi-naturality of things for educational purposes as forms of social/cultural life should never lose sight of the often somewhat opaque viscosity of their significance.

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Chapter 12
Spiritual Grounding and Adult Education

Leona M. English

Abstract The author takes an autobiographical look at her practice as an adult educator who is concerned with spirituality. She begins with a discussion of three sources of inspiration for the spiritual life. The first case is the leaders of the Antigonish Movement, who were inspired by the Gospel to work at a local level to improve the lives of fishers and farmers. The second case is the Christian mystics, whose deep spiritual and prayer lives enabled them to challenge power and inequity. The third is the writing of Canadian naturalist Sharon Butala, who shares her spirituality of the land. The author then draws from these cases a set of principles and practices for adult education: the fluid use of language to be inclusive and open to the spirit, the practice of appreciative inquiry to inform research and teaching, and the cultivation of reflective practice to enable students to integrate the various aspects of their lives and work.

Introduction

> "Who do you write for?" I asked the poet. "For God," he answered, "but you may eavesdrop." (Layton 1997)

The invitation to write for this chapter is simultaneously exhilarating and anxiety producing. It brings immediately to mind Canadian philosopher Loraine Code's (1991) epistemological taunts: What can she know? What can she say? Although I have been taken with the idea and experience of spirituality all my life I am a bit jittery about writing about it especially in the context of something as grand as a mythopoetic project. My mythopoetic project is not a project or a curriculum or a thing at all. It is increasingly a grail to quest after, rather than a constant presence. In this chapter, I will share some of the insights from this quest.

As with many an aspirant to the spiritually grounded life, my days are filled with quotidian tasks of being a faculty member in adult education at a small undergraduate university and my students are mostly distance students. In this context I am encouraged to research and write about the things I hold dear, especially about my spirituality of adult education, which is informed and "grounded" primarily by my Christian upbringing, as well as my studies in theology.

T. Leonard, P. Willis (eds.), *Pedagogies of the Imagination,*

The word mythopoesis suggests to me world spirit, the ground of our being which moves us out into the world of human experience. I hold with the notion that to be mythopoetic is to be spiritually grounded, even if this means "to have both feet planted firmly in mid-air" (McNeill 2000). This recognises the spirit that is coursing through our bodies, minds, relationships, and work, and is often felt as a "lusty stroke of life," as the Newfoundland poet E. J. Pratt (1968, p. 3) says. The importance of living spirituality with a lusty stroke of life became very apparent to me when preparing this chapter. A review of some favourite journals, *Weavings*, *The Way*, and *Human Development*, revealed a "holy," quiet, and reflective spirituality that is probably out of reach of busy practitioners, including me. So I offer a poetics here that is grounded not in soil, gardens, and water, but in the everyday, in the politics of human interaction, in order to cultivate what a Nobel Prize winning geneticist called a "feeling for the organism" (Keller 1983) or a sense that all of one's being is involved in pedagogy.

Of the three approaches to the relationship between religion and spirituality that Sandra Schneiders (2003) distinguishes—mutually indifferent, in competition with each other, having the possibility of partnership—I relate most to the latter. I agree with Alan Jones (2005), the dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, that spirituality owes its lifeblood to the religious traditions that have nurtured it and are not distinct from it. To be a spiritually grounded teacher is to be engaged with tradition, yet to recognise how those traditions have colonized and been the colonizers. Even spirituality has been co-opted by the marketplace. As sociologist of religion Robert Wuthnow notes, "big business finds many of its best markets by putting things in small, easy-to-consume packages" (1998, p. 132). This essay resists such market speak in favor of a more complicated reading of spirituality in a mythopoetic context.

Three Stories

Living and working in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, the Canadian home of adult education and social action, I am daily surrounded by the stories of the redoubtable Fathers Jimmy Tompkins and Moses Coady who had incredible fervor for the cause of establishing cooperatives for poor fishers, farmers, and miners in the first half of the twentieth century. The depth of Coady's enthusiasm for his cause is contained in the following gem. At a meeting of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, of which he was president, Coady was overheard responding to a critic. "I'm not a leftist," he said, "I'm where the righteous ought to be" (Kidd 1975, p. 242). This playful use of the language of righteous (religious) with leftist (more overtly political) shows me the ease with which Coady blended his religious and political convictions to enact social and economic reform. His co-leader Fr. Jimmy Tompkins was much like him: fiery and imbued with justice ideals. When someone said to him, "I understand you are making good Catholics of all those Nova Scotia fishermen," Father Tompkins retorted: "God help us, can you tell me any Catholic way of canning lobsters?" (Kidd 1975, p. 244). Theirs is a public, secular type of spirituality that asks questions of meaning, purpose, and motivation.

Both men, scholars and practitioners, understood that their Catholicism needed to have feet so they spent their days organizing, preparing readings, and holding meetings and at the same time struggling with the hierarchy of St Francis Xavier University and the local diocese, trying to explain how their work was gospel centered. For his efforts in organizing one nondenominational university for the region, Tompkins was exiled to a remote fishing village, basically because he was spending too much time with Protestants. Yet he persevered, firm in his commitment that economics was a gospel matter (see Lotz and Welton 1997).

I am also informed by the Christian mystical tradition, especially by the thirteenth-century Helfta mystics, women who have taught me about the connections among feminism, spirituality, and power. Although the texts of all three female mystics at Helfta have been helpful, I am especially drawn to Mechthild of Magdeburg's (1207–1282) *Flowing light of the divinity* (1991). Mechthild had lived in a beguinage (loose form of community that cared for the poor and needy) before moving to Helfta in her old age. In her writing the abuse of power by religious leaders was foremost in her mind, presumably because she was afflicted by it. Writing to her sisters she warned:

> There lies great terror in power. When someone says: "You are our prelate or our prior", God knows, dear, you will be tempted to the fullest extent, so you should prostrate yourself with great humility… so that you may help … all your brothers and sisters who have been entrusted to your care. (Mechthild of Magdeburg 1991, pp. vi, 1)

Her feminist awareness of abuse of power and its effects on women is prescient. Her writing is evidence of a spirituality of action and contemplation, and of acknowledgement of politics in all places.

One of Mechthild's specific writing strategies was using the rhetoric of femininity to subvert the more obvious constraints (e.g. acting as a shy, subservient woman when she was in fact encouraging other Helfta nuns' writing and pushing for church reform). In joining the vowed religious at Helfta, she legitimated her mysticism, which was associated with heresy, and skilfully negotiated the complex religious labyrinth of orthodoxy in her day. Her spirituality was informed by her intellect and her faith.

Another source for me is Canadian writer Sharan Butala, author of *The perfection of the morning: a woman's awakening in nature* (1997), a memoir that recounts how she went at midlife to live on an isolated Canadian ranch with her new husband. Previously an urban Canadian academic, she now works and walks the prairie and tries in desperation to learn from it. Butala details the everyday, the quotidian, and the quiet; she lets the prairie speak to her of forbearing and relationship with the world, not to mention patience. At heart this book is a spiritual journey about a very ordinary woman who enters unknown territory (rural and ranching) and apprentices herself to nature, suffering loneliness and asking the prairie to teach her what it knows about life. As she studies it and walks it, she begins to befriend the prairie, though it takes twenty years. This memoir is in many ways a long dark night on the spiritual journey, in this case one that is lived through the physicality of walking the land, and living through her suffering.

Of these examples of being spiritually grounded, one is very "religious" (Mechthild), one very secular (Butala), and one in between (Coady and Tompkins).

These examples are less about the work of practice and more about sustenance in the life of the activist, the monastic, and the writer. Such stories of inspiration and struggle in the lived reality of people I have never met show me what it means to have what Etty Hillesum calls the "thinking heart" (Hillesum 1985, p. 236) or the ability to be both rational and feeling all at once. Their stories are about varied ways of inviting the spirit into the everyday to move spiritual conviction to practice.

Principles and Practices

I turn now to how spirituality enters into my practice, or at least my thoughts and intentions in adult educational practice.

One aspect of these historical cases that draws me in is how the actors cultivated faculties of receptivity. I take as my inspiration here the work of the Romantic poet John Keats (1795–1821) who talked of the necessity of "negative capability" (Keats 1952, p. 71), which occurs "when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (Keats 1952, p. 71). Negative capability is a state of receptivity and openness to what might happen; it is not invested in quick closure or definitiveness. It is not unlike the heart sutra's notion of "no form, no feeling, no perception, no formation, no consciousness" (Bamford 2005, pp. 14–15) and Therese of Lisieux's notion of "unpetalling" (Bamford 2005, p. 20). Negative capability encourages our spiritual capacity of receptivity to mystery. All these actors—certainly Butala and Mechthild—knew about doubt and uncertainty and yet were open.

I have learned a lot about negative capability and the spiritual life through interviewing sixteen women who serve as directors and board members of local nonprofit women's centers in rural and eastern Canada (English 2006). In their work of sponsoring literacy, violence prevention, and other women-positive education programs, they have been under siege from government bureaucracies and traditional conservative politics. The interviews yielded rich data on how they are able to work for justice, peace, and resources in the messy community sphere. In the midst of inadequate funding and poor conditions they live the ambiguity, never forcing solutions (there are none). They are open to what comes their way and they learn in myriad ways from the challenges, the physical and verbal violence, they encounter. Negative capability nurtures their spirituality of action.

Consistent with negative capability and its openness to the new and the emergent, I am trying to work in language that is less rigid and controlling, especially when it comes to spirituality and living the spiritual life. Terms such as uncertainty, intersection, boundary crossings, shifting, and shaping appeal to me. They acknowledge that the spiritual life is less defined and more fluid, more in process, unlike a ladder or a journey, the terms traditionally used to describe it. This fluid language speaks more clearly than modernistic terms like integration or self-actualization, and encourages me to accept that we are confused and clear, doubting and believing, trusting and unsure, close and far, fractured and together all at once. It is okay

to be religious and to resist religion; to spiral towards God and back from God; to be in connection with our tradition and yet to arc away. I understand trust and belief and spirituality in a variety of non-traditional ways and I am trying to use language in ways that reflect this uncertainty and openness to mystery.

This postmodern tolerance of fluidity has become most clear to me through interviewing thirteen women who worked overseas as international educators in underdeveloped countries and who have returned to their home countries in North America and Africa (English 2005). They find that they no longer fit; they are living the questions (Rilke 1993, p. 34) of their lives, and are having a hard time finding community or space to live out their spiritual and social justice commitments. Unwelcome in subtle ways in many churches and schools, these women inhabit the margins, finding spiritual community in unlikely places, yet continuously striving for justice. An acceptance of this fluidity of the spiritual life challenges us as educators who need to control or at least direct learning, and yet it also opens spaces. It challenges me to embrace ambiguity and difference in myself and others, without being shocked or resisting it. It is indeed poetic in the sense that it is bound up in what Mary Oliver describes as "three ingredients of poetry: the mystery of the universe, spiritual curiosity, and the energy of language" (1995, p. 573).

Appreciative inquiry has become part of the research and writing culture of my academic department. Over the past eight years we have worked as a team to build an appreciative research culture, in which we honor the work of one another by reading and responding appreciatively to one another's writing. We have built a climate of safety where we read and write our research (Lander and English 2000), and where we work together to find our "truth," which Bakhtin describes as "not to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (Bakhtin 1984, p. 110) Through a constant engagement with one another's texts we are finding our collaborative truth, appreciating persons and their creations—a spiritual discipline if ever there was one. And we have been working to do this mutual exchange and creation in ways that honor our difference. I am reminded here of Lindeman's classic essay *The meaning of adult education* (1926), which describes the process of "giving each other our difference":

> We should, if we were bravely intelligent, beg individuals to give us their difference, not their sameness. Nothing exciting can happen in a world of uniformities and homogeneities. Divergence is the factor which induces a life of succeeding contingencies—a life, that is, in which individual conduct is of import. (Lindeman 1926, pp. 52–53)

Abundantly clear in all these examples—the more distant cases of Butala and Mechthild, and the more recent qualitative research—is the need for the teacher to care for herself as well as for her teaching. This follows the advice of Meister Eckhart (1260–1326), a Dominican priest who made many observations on the type of balance that is needed for healthy living and working. Eckhart noted:

> when we find ourselves under pressure or constraint, it will be apparent that we are more worked than working, and so that we may learn to enter into a relationship of cooperation with our God. It is not that we should abandon, neglect or deny our inner self, but we should learn to work precisely in it, with it and from it in such a way that interiority turns

> into effective action and effective action leads back to interiority and we become used to acting without any compulsion. (1994, p. 45)

Eckhart's message is as relevant then as now for me and my life. Though the work of an academic requires some "living in my head" and a fair bit of literally sitting down, this is not all there is. American spiritual writer Kathleen Norris (1996) shares a similar wisdom about physicality that she learned from living in a Benedictine monastery. In *The cloister walk*, she cites the order's founder, St Benedict, on the importance of ora *et* labora (work *and* prayer): even the most learned Benedictine scrubs the floors and cleans the tables. No community member is exempt from service (Norris 1996, p. 7). Of course, the message here is not only about service but also about the physical dimensions of life and living that nurture the soul.

Yes, you say, this is all well and good, but it lacks sufficient connection to the immediate teaching and learning experience. What does the mythopoetic or spiritually grounded teacher do? Drawing on what has come before, I would hold that he or she begins in the use of language that includes and does not exclude—language like spirituality and holistic learning—and uses teaching approaches and views that engage the whole person: reflective practice and holistic knowing. Cheryl Hunt's (1998) scholarship is helpful here since it brings together reflective practice and spirituality. Hunt defines reflective practice as "a process, incorporating a range of different techniques, through which one can acquire a deeper understanding of oneself and one's interconnections with others and one's working environment" (1998, p. 326). In other words, reflective practice encourages time for reflection on professional activities, readings, and philosophical orientations, so that informal and incidental learning can occur continuously.

The use of reflective practice is aided in large part by tools such as learning journals, which provide yet more texts to reflect upon and which enable the learner to track the twists and turns in learning (see English and Gillen 2001). The department in which I teach has a reflective practice orientation that suits the professional development focus of our master's program. We have one whole phase of the program, toward the end, where students are asked to reflect on and document their learning since orientation day. Some students even refer to circumstances and factors that led to their decision to apply for the program. This phase provides the space to engage with what happened in the master's program and why. It is this reflective practice that engages the whole person, mind, body, and spirit, and facilitates a new spiritual way of knowing.

In our program, we also ask students to develop a professional portfolio early, not for transfer credit or advanced standing, but for the opportunity it provides them to be reflexive about their vocation. The portfolio is an individualized project that helps our faculty heed Boud and Walker's injunction against "recipe following" in promoting reflection in professional courses:

> Recipe following is inappropriate because it does not take account of the uniqueness of the learners, their prior experience, the particular context in which they are operating nor the need to address any unhelpful dynamics of power or oppression which may intrude. (Boud and Walker 1998, p. 204)

Portfolios, journals, and other reflective practice tools help to individualize what each student brings to the program and to facilitate the deepest level of knowing possible: self-knowledge and spirituality.

In connection with this, appreciative inquiry has also come to be a deliberate teaching practice that influences aspects of my teaching, especially approaches to evaluation. In the past, my focus was on trying to improve, to change to correct my mistakes. I would always frame my questions in terms of: What is going right? What might improve? What could I do next time? When a colleague in adult education introduced me to appreciative inquiry, I was challenged to focus on the positive and to ask students: What is happening that is effective? I became more interested as a teacher in "fanning" or cultivating the positive. As a result my teaching changed. There was no doubt that I found room for improvement but my gaze and lens of perception had been altered forever. My energy was moving to the positive, to what was going right, to the spirit of the dialogical teaching encounter.

Of Other Things

This essay has explored some of the ways in which I have engaged in a spiritually grounded pedagogy. It covers the terrain of my teaching, my inspiration in the Christian tradition and in literature, and my engagement with reflective practice. I recognise that this spiritual grounding has a base of sand that is shifting and moving daily, affected by my attention to what is happening in my life and in the lives of those around me. Yet I hold close to me the stories that have sustained me—stories of Moses Coady and Jimmy Tompkins, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Sharon Butala—and I allow them to inform my quest. I hone my tools of dexterity in language, appreciative inquiry, good use of play time and negative capability, and I use them on a daily basis to share my spiritual journey in ways that are non-threatening and that honor varied ways of being spiritual. My spiritual cum mythopoetic journey is full of contradictions and catastrophes, a work in progress. According to spiritual writer and Quaker Parker Palmer (1999), it requires that I listen daily to what my life intends to do with me, not what I intend to do with my life.

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Chapter 13
Ignatian Spirituality as Mythopoesis*

Gerry Healy

Abstract The Jesuit Order, a religious order within the Catholic Church, conducts a wide variety of educational institutions throughout the world. The order believes that there is a characteristic Jesuit educational vision, based on the spirituality of its founder, St Ignatius Loyola. The communication of this vision is a challenge to the order, especially with the growing number of lay staff in its schools and universities. Experience and research has shown that this vision is more effectively communicated through narrative and story (myth or mythopoesis) than traditional conceptual presentation. In this chapter, some of the programs to communicate this vision are described, together with the reactions of a variety of participants in them, illustrating the mythopoetic approach outlined in earlier chapters.

Introduction

Mythopoesis has been described as the pedagogy "where the reflective imagination is actively evoked and personal and social myths 'brought forth' (mythopoesis) in order to generate forms of transformation" (Willis and Carden 2004, p. 1).

A mythopoetic approach, then, can be contrasted to a communication mode in which knowledge is seen as an object to be communicated; a cognitive model of transmission. For Willis's description to be exemplified we need models of effective communication that incorporate imagination, reflection, and the practical use of personal and social myths.

This chapter looks at communication of the Jesuit educational vision, and particularly its social justice emphasis, to lay and Jesuit staff of the order's educational institutions over the last forty years. The lack of success of approaches based on cognitive models of knowledge led to the development of programs that can be characterized as "mythopoetic." These programs combined story (myth) with reflection on personal life story. In this chapter I examine two programs in particular,

* This chapter is based on research done by the author in the period 1995–2000 as part of Ph.D. studies, and includes research material and excerpts drawn from that work.

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the "Colloquium on the Ministry of Teaching" and "Meeting Ignatius," and I look at the reactions of participants and reflect on why this mythopoetic approach has been more effective.

Background

The Jesuit Order was founded by St Ignatius Loyola in 1540. It is a religious order of priests and brothers within the Catholic Church, involved in many different works across the world. Education (schools and universities) is a significant part of those works. The Jesuit Order, although a religious order within the Catholic Church, gradually developed a distinctive spirituality—an approach to reflection on the deeper things of life, and to prayer and spiritual practices. One of the main expressions of this spirituality is the "spiritual exercises" (Loyola 1978). The spiritual exercises grew out of Ignatius' own conversion experience, his own spiritual journey, and his growing self-awareness. Similarly, as the schools and universities developed, a distinctive pedagogy or teaching practice developed. It was quite eclectic; the Jesuits took what they saw as worthwhile in the world around them and, combined with the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius, developed the characteristic Jesuit educational vision. It is the means of communication of this vision, especially to the exponentially growing lay (non-Jesuit) staff in the schools and universities that concerns us here.

New Challenges

The period around 1965 formed a sort of watershed in the history of the Catholic Church, and hence the Jesuit Order and its educational ministry.

The Second Vatican Council was convened by Pope John XXIII to begin in 1963. In the history of the church, General Councils generally have met to address specific crises; they have involved a gathering of all the bishops of the world. These councils are the ultimate authority in the Catholic Church, and they have extensive powers. The previous General Council (the First Vatican Council) was held in the 1870s, and the council prior to that at Trent in the 1500s. The Second Vatican Council initiated extensive changes in the Catholic Church. Two of the most significant in terms of church structures were the increased authority of bishops compared with the central authority of the church, and the increased role of the laity. These trends reversed the emphases of the First Vatican Council on centralized authority and clericalism. The Second Vatican Council was a source of serious divisions in the church between "progressive" and "conservative" elements, and this division extended into the Jesuit Order itself and its lay collaborators in the educational ministry.

Simultaneously affecting much of the Jesuit Order were developments in the Third World nations in which many Jesuits worked, particularly decolonization following the end of the Second World War.

In the Jesuit order the General Congregation, at which there are two or three representatives from each of the approximately seventy provinces, has two functions: to elect a General if necessary, and to act as the main policy-making body, with authority to make some changes to the Constitutions. The 31st General Congregation was held in two sessions in 1965 and 1966, partly because of the timing of the last session of Vatican Council II. It elected Fr. Pedro Arrupe as the new Superior General. He was a Basque (incidentally the first Basque to be General since Ignatius). A medical doctor before he entered the Jesuit Order, he had spent most of his life in Japan, including spending most of World War II in Nagasaki. His background and personality had a profound effect on the changes during his generalate. The congregation also addressed the question of general renewal in the Jesuit order, partly in the light of Vatican II. A further General Congregation was held in 1974–1975. These two congregations are often treated together, as they attempted to set a tone and a direction for Jesuit apostolic work. Between them they initiated profound changes and renewal.

There were two major emphases in this renewal that are relevant to the education ministry:

1. A return to and a re-emphasis on the early history and spirit of the order, with spiritual exercises in particular as normative. The rapid growth in the size of Jesuit educational institutions, and the decreasing number of Jesuits in them, led to a large increase in the lay–Jesuit ratio, and the need to communicate the Jesuit spiritual and educational ethos to the lay component. With a significant proportion of Jesuits in each school, this had occurred by a laissez-faire process of "osmosis," but now needed to be more systematic and formal.
2. An emphasis on social justice, or more explicitly "the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement" (32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus 1975, section 48).

The 1960s and 1970s were times of growing awareness of injustice and social evil in the world. Poverty, wealth imbalance, and political repression were seen as particularly prevalent in three areas of the world where there is a strong Jesuit presence: South and Central America and the Philippines. In North America the civil rights movement, especially the campaign for desegregation, flourished, with considerable Jesuit involvement. In South and Central America in particular, the role of Jesuit educational institutions came under strong scrutiny within and outside the order for their role, or lack of it, in civil rights and social justice. The Jesuit schools and universities encompassed the whole socioeconomic spectrum, but some schools in particular were seen as elitist, as serving the wealthy and powerful classes, and hence of promoting and prolonging social injustice. Strong division arose between those in "wealthy" and those in "poor" schools over their respective roles. The growth of "liberation theology" and the role of the theology faculties of some of the South and Central American Jesuit universities led to bitter internal and public condemnation of the role of some of the schools in prolonging social injustice and repression.

The 32nd General Congregation (late 1974) addressed this issue strongly, as did Fr. Pedro Arrupe in several key addresses and documents. He spelled out a strong

mandate for social justice and liberation as an essential element of the Christian message. In 1973 he took the opportunity of the Tenth International Congress of Jesuit Alumni of Europe in Valencia, Spain, to make what has become a keynote address, and coined the phrase so strongly identified with him and used so much in Jesuit educational literature "Men for Others."

> Education for justice has become in recent years one of the chief concerns … Why? Because … participation in the promotion of justice and the liberation of the oppressed is a constitutive element of the mission which Our Lord has entrusted …
> Today our prime educational objective must be to form men-for-others … men who cannot even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbors; men completely convinced that love of God which does not issue in justice for men is a farce …
> This kind of education goes directly counter to the prevailing educational trend practically everywhere in the world. We Jesuits have always been heavily committed to the educational apostolate. We still are. What, then, shall we do? Go with the current or against it? I can think of no subject more appropriate than this for the General of the Jesuits to take up with former students of Jesuit schools. (Arrupe 1973, paras 1, 2, 3)

This is not to lay prideful claim to superior insight or intelligence. It is simply our heritage from the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius.

Programs to Implement These Emphases

The sheer size (and therefore resources) of the Jesuit high schools in the United States, and the social conditions there, caused them to be leaders in responding to these calls for renewal and conversion.

A parallel step was an extensive series of workshops on faith and justice in many of the high schools. The program was drawn up and administered by a team of ten facilitators drawn from the schools, and thirty-six workshops were held during the first semester of 1975–1976; these attempted to cover the entire staffs of the Jesuit high schools. Fr. Edwin McDermott SJ (President of the Jesuit Secondary Educational Association) drew up a detailed report on the implementation of this emphasis on social justice as a result of feedback from the workshops and from the use of a self-evaluation instrument. His findings and recommendations were quite extensive, but underlying much of it he identified significant difference in responses. They reflected varying theologies, especially ecclesiologies of different respondents. In general he found a strong support for "justice" in general (like motherhood or apple pie, as one put it) but an enormous variety in the interpretation of what this meant in practice in a school.

A review of efforts to inculcate this emphasis on social justice in the staff of Jesuit high schools made somewhat depressing reading. There had been an expectation among the Jesuit leadership that implementation of such a change would be relatively easy, that all (Jesuit and lay, conservatives and progressives—both educationally and philosophically) would see the logic of the vision and embrace it. What people (both administrators and teachers alike) tended to do was to re-interpret the vision in terms of their own personal position, needs, and outlook. Similarly

self-evaluation had shown that relatively little impact had been made on actual classroom behaviors and hence student perceptions.

The realization was that the approach taken had been far too cognitive and intellectual. The next move was seen to be to take a step back from this, and to try to address the different understandings of education and theology that were acting as barriers. In order to bring about a stronger implementation of this Ignatian vision at the grassroots level, in the late 1970s a group gathered together to develop a special workshop-retreat-reflection experience, the Colloquium on the Ministry of Teaching. This program is described in more detail below. It was very widely used in the United States, in both Jesuit and other schools. Unlike the previous programs developed by the Jesuit Secondary Educational Association, the colloquium was used extensively outside the United States, including use in Jesuit schools in Australia and widely in other Catholic schools. It was modified somewhat to suit other environments.

The colloquium aimed to prepare staff in schools for change by a process of increased self-knowledge, through a process that can readily be characterized as "mythopoetic."

Colloquium on the Ministry of Teaching

The Colloquium on the Ministry of Teaching was developed initially in the United States of America, in response to the perceived failure of cognitive methods of inducing change, particularly related to social justice issues, and more general educational directions.

The program was used in many parts of the world, in Jesuit institutions and also taken up by other educational bodies. It was used in the Australian Jesuit schools in the early 1980s. The staff of these schools participated in a colloquium in a three-day live-in program, in groups of about thirty, each group drawn from across the schools. The reactions and comments reported here are drawn from this Australian experience.

Description of the Program

The colloquium was based on shared stories. The process called for presenters to share their own story briefly on a particular topic, and then to ask participants to reflect on a similar experience in their own lives. Some sharing of stories among participants, both in pairs and larger groups, occurred, but it was always emphasised that sharing of personal stories was at the choice of each participant.

The process took participants through their own self-image, their image of their God, their experiences of life and particularly of their teaching lives, and led on to their impact on others, and hence the call to bring what they had received to others in turn.

Presentations were by peers—that is, as far as possible, other teachers were used as the presenters—typically four for each colloquium. They were encouraged to share experiences based on the question for the session, using examples that participants would identify with.

For example, in the session on images of God, presenters would often speak of their own spiritual journey; of how their image of God had developed. As a child, God was often seen as a harsh judge, keeping a track of misdemeanors. As they grew, God often became quite remote during their late teenage and early adult years; yes, they believed in God, but God's impact on their daily lives was not strong. Often it was some significant event, either positive or negative, that brought a change, such as the birth of a child or a death in the family. One presenter spoke movingly of her experience of a miscarriage. A growing maturity often brought a change to their image of God to one of a friend, a companion, a person whom they trusted in their lives. Many participants found the description of others' spiritual journeys enlightening. They saw their own spiritual journey in them—or more likely, the point at which they were at on their journey. For many, they had really never moved beyond their childhood notion of God, and the experience of the colloquium lead to a more adult relationship with God.

In the session on the call to teach, presenters often described their early teaching days, and the embarrassing experiences that they thought had only happened to them, and which they hoped to keep from their colleagues. One spoke of a particularly difficult class group she had experienced in her first year of teaching. She lay awake at night wondering what they would get up to next day, and how her peer teachers and worse still the school administration would react if they found out! Then she recalled one of the worst of those students, a very successful community leader in later years, coming back years afterwards to express his deep gratitude for her patience and tolerance of him, and how that had carried him through a very difficult time in his life. As she put it: "If only he knew!" For many participants, this sharing of weakness, especially by people they looked up to as highly competent, was a strengthening experience. It was "OK" to have difficulties, to be unsure of oneself, and even to reveal this to others.

Often a presenter would speak of a particularly dark period in their life. One spoke of a time when his marriage was in difficulties. He and his wife were drifting apart, hardly talking to one another. They worked through this with help, and in the colloquium he reflected on how this dark period had strengthened their relationship; now they knew that they could cope with a stressful time without long-term detriment to their relationship, and that this brought them both a peace. Relating an experience of a time of difficulty which on looking back was a significant growth experience was a source of strength to many participants who may themselves have been going through some degree of difficulty or uncertainly.

The lesson of the methodology of the colloquium, and its implications for mythopoesis, is that it was the relating of their own stories by presenters, and the identification by participants with these experiences in their own lives, that was so powerful. A conceptual description—"We often grow through adversity"—has nothing of the impact of relating an account of how it happened to oneself.

Participants' Reactions

Reactions to the colloquium were generally overwhelmingly positive. Prior to undertaking the colloquium apprehension was expressed by some staff, who perhaps felt threatened by the process, possibly because its nature was not adequately explained beforehand. Similarly some with no religious or Catholic background may have been apprehensive. For the vast majority it was a very positive growth experience. For some it was a very significant turning point in their own spiritual and faith life.

> *Robyn*: What else have I enjoyed about a Jesuit school—I've enjoyed the opportunity the Jesuits have given me to develop and mature in my own relationship with my God.
> When I look at other initiatives in helping staff to understand Jesuit education, I think the colloquium was a great thing and that was years and years ago. In terms of putting God and education in very much a partnership, and it was great. I thought it was very brave. I thought the program initiated in a sense an excellence in education as teachers—and how we as teachers view ourselves and how we as teachers can improve our own ability in the profession we have chosen. At the same time it stopped and looked at ourselves. If we are to improve our ability in education we have to understand ourselves. That program, which I thought was very wide, and then the next part of it was, well, if I'm understanding myself well how does God fit into all of this, the teacher and understand oneself, which is you know the pivot of Jesuit education.
> *Steven*: If I had to mention a specific experience for me I guess it would have been the colloquium, which I did very soon after starting to teach here. It was an important spiritual experience for me—it probably came at just the right time in my own spiritual development and growth—fairly soon after I had started teaching, fairly recently married—I think we had one or two of the kids at the time—and it just helped to integrate various aspects of my life and see them in a religious or spiritual dimension.

A female teacher at another school, not a Catholic, spoke of the impact on her:

> And the colloquium that I went on had a big impact on me. I found it a very important experience—that was in my second year. I went to the one in Sydney—Point Piper. And that had a big impact on me—it gave time for reflection, as a person as well as a teacher.

She came back to her diary many times, which was a common experience related by a number of staff:

> The colloquium was very good—just that thing of being able to reflect and write in a journal. I keep mine under my nighties—because it was personal—in my drawer. And yet—I see it when I tidy up—I went through and things that I thought a number of years ago—they were significant, and I've moved on from there. But there are things that I'd forgotten about that were important.
> I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it. [Name of presenter] was particularly good, and I think I could connect with her, too. You know as another female—mother, teacher, person—who had time to go to a colloquium and share on these rather personal issues.

Tom spoke at greater length of his own experience:

> It probably came at a sort of significant point in my life. I went on one of those first colloquiums that we had in Sydney. Sort of both as a community-building experience and as a personal experience for me, I'd have to say it was very, very significant. That theme that has come up since of reflection—which we didn't talk about explicitly in those days did we?—I can see the colloquium was very much in that sort of mould. So for me the colloquium was an extremely important, significant experience because it was just the opportunity to reflect on

> what I was doing as a teacher. But not so much as a teacher; it sort of gave me a much greater understanding of my self-image, of the things that have formed us—see I can remember that; it must have been fifteen years ago. It just helped me to know myself much better. It made me think about the good things I had in life—a good job and family—it was personally very helpful and maybe it just came at the sort of right point in my life. And I think also, well, how long had I been at the school—maybe eight years or ten years or something—no, a bit less than that—it made me think about what am I contributing and giving back. I think up to that time I'd sort of been seeing what I was getting, and it made me think of that call to give back. I suppose it comes back to that Men for Others thing, doesn't it; although I don't think we were talking about that at that time. It certainly was very significant for me, and the fact also that it was a mix of Jesuits and lay people—there were a number of Jesuits who weren't sort of heavies on it, on the one I was on, quite a few, I think about five or six—and the fact that we mixed with them and then that the team that gave it—there were one or two Jesuits and three lay people if I remember rightly. Yes, that was a very significant experience and it was a great experience that came at just the right point in my life—it would have been a year or two after my mother died, and yeah it was just significant as a reflection experience—so if there was one experience or in-service type thing it was certainly the colloquium.

A particular problem existed for young or very new teachers; it was essentially a process based on reflection on the participant's life story, especially the experience of teaching. Those with little life or teaching experience sometimes felt left out, especially if they by chance did the colloquium with a particularly reflective group who shared their experiences at a deep level.

> The first colloquium I went on was in '82, and I had only been teaching for two years, and I was just too young to have anything to reflect on. I just wondered what is this all about. It wasn't for another five years that I knew what it was to be a teacher.

As with any program, the call to reflect deeply on significant parts of one's life can be both positive but also challenging and demanding, and it can also be distressing. One senior staff member commented about one participant:

> *Tom*: There has only been one person that I'm aware of in the last 5 or 6 years who has been hostile, and that was because it was too confronting for her. She has had a very difficult life in terms of her parents dying unexpectedly, several things like that. She spoke to me at length about it afterwards. It was just too close. The self-examination, although you do it, you can choose the levels that you do it at, for this person she does do a lot of self-examination, but she just found it a bit too confronting.
> *GH*: Did she find the whole process helpful?
> *Tom*: In the long run, yes she did; very much so.

Comments

One of the most interesting findings of this research was the obvious difference in the effectiveness of programs that are largely cognitive and programs that could be described as mythopoetically oriented. In both the United States and Australian experience, the colloquium was a significant experience for many, preparing them for change and growth. Interestingly, this occurred both at a personal and group level. Several colloquiums that the author was involved in presenting involved the

whole staff of one school. In a number of cases, this had a very strong impact on staff cohesion and effectiveness. In at least one case, it led to the resignation of one staff member who came to the conclusion that they were personally at variance with the school and staff's overall perspective.

Two reasons, among others, for the effectiveness of the process emerge. Firstly, the dynamic began with the personal experience of the participant: it built on reflection on where they were in their own lives, their personal and spiritual growth, and their role as a teacher. Secondly, the effectiveness of presentations depended significantly on the "ordinariness" of the presentations, the ability of the participants to relate it to their own experience. A number of very dramatic presentations were less effective because participants saw them as outside their own experience of life. The most compelling involved a presenter—a more experienced teacher—telling a simple story of their own earlier experience.

Meeting Ignatius

A second program I would like to focus on was called "Meeting Ignatius." Unlike the colloquium, which was used worldwide, Meeting Ignatius was a program developed in one particular school in Australia, and only used locally—that is, in a few of the Australian Jesuit schools. But it is based very much on a mythopoetic approach to vision communication, and was similarly effective. This was in contrast to a number of cognitive presentations on Ignatius' life, which while entertaining had little long-term effect.

Description of the Program

Like the colloquium, Meeting Ignatius was a three-day live-in program, and focused similarly on an integrated combination of input, personal reading, reflecting, writing, and sharing in pairs and small groups. Compared with the colloquium, it had a far more explicit focus on Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuit Order, and Jesuit tradition; the colloquium had been used with very little adaptation in many other Catholic schools in Australia and Asia. The Meeting Ignatius program was more historical in its approach, and focused on the person and writing of Ignatius himself. It reflected the emphasis in Jesuit spirituality, mentioned above, on both the individual person and the impact of Ignatius himself.

It focused on Ignatius' own story of his personal spiritual journey, especially as recorded in his autobiography, a document not written by him but dictated to a companion late in Ignatius' life, reflecting back on his own journey. The Meeting Ignatius program took participants through Ignatius' journey, asking them at various points to relate this to their own life journey, and to develop an account of that.

To understand it requires some knowledge of Ignatius' own journey.

Ignatius' Life

Ignatius Loyola was born in the Loyola family castle, in the Basque region of northern Spain, probably in 1491. He was the last of about nine children, born to a family of noble background but in fairly dire circumstances. Ignatius received a basic education, and at the age of about thirteen went as a courtier-in-training to the household of Juan Velazquez de Cuellar, treasurer to King Ferdinand of Aragon, and later to become a knight in the service of the Duke of Navarre.

The life of chivalry, regular partying, probably debauchery, and womanizing, which characterized the knightly life of the time, suited Ignatius admirably. From his own admission in his autobiography, he seems to have been driven strongly by the desire to be admired and looked up to. Hence his twin drives seem to have been the desire for great military honor in the service of his duke, and the admiration of women, especially a particular woman whose adulation he sought. "He was a man given to the follies of the world; and what he enjoyed most was warlike sport, with a great and foolish desire to win fame" (Loyola 1992, p. 1).

He was injured in the Battle of Pamplona in 1521, and returned to the family castle at Loyola. During his recuperation, Ignatius sought reading matter of the kind that reflected his former lifestyle: tales of great deeds of arms and of amorous conquests. However the only material available consisted of lives of saints: *The golden legend* by Jacobus de Voragine (c1260) and the *Life of Christ* by Ludolph of Saxony (1499). Forced to read these, he found surprisingly that he began to picture himself doing the great deeds portrayed in these lives of saints. His desire to please and receive the adulation of an earthly leader transferred to the person of Christ. He began to imagine the possibility of fashioning his own life after those of the saints, especially Francis (of Assisi) and Dominic. Many have seen this as a radical conversion; but the continuity with his previous fantasies is obvious, with great spiritual deeds for a heavenly leader replacing great military deeds for an Earthly leader, and the person of Mary, Mother of God, replacing the ideal woman whose admiration he had previously sought.

In his mind he debated the two possible directions of his life: a return to his former path, or turning to the path exemplified by the saints. He found that imagining the former left him feeling dry and unfulfilled, whereas the second brought him a sense of peace and satisfaction. Thus began the process of reflecting on the effect of his experiences. In this process, which he called "discernment," he went over the two sides of a question or issue to be resolved. He imagined himself having made each decision in turn, and then reflected on his reactions and feelings to having made the decision each way. This discernment process was to become a distinctive feature of Ignatius' approach, and the beginning of a methodology he would teach others, which gradually evolved into the distinctive spiritual exercises. As he wrote in his autobiography:

> When he was thinking about the things of the world, he took much delight in them, but afterwards, when he was tired and put them aside, he found that he was dry and discontented. But when he thought about going to Jerusalem, barefoot and eating nothing but herbs and undergoing all the other rigours that he saw the saints had endured, not only was

> he consoled when he had these thoughts, but even after putting them aside he remained content and happy. He did not wonder, however, at this; nor did he stop to ponder the difference until one time his eyes were opened a little, and he began to marvel at the difference and to reflect upon it, realising from experience that some thoughts left him sad and others happy. Little by little he came to recognize the difference between the spirits that agitated him, one from the demon, the other from God. (Loyola 1992, p. 8)

This discernment process became archetypical of the method of directing others practised by Ignatius and his followers. It was not a cognitive method of argumentation; rather it relied on reflecting on one's own imaginative and emotive reaction to each of the alternatives. The method of reflection depended heavily on the use of the imagination—many of the meditations in the spiritual exercises require imagining oneself in particular scenes, either of Jesus' life or of possible scenarios of one's own life.

Realizing his own lack of education, he returned to studies at a mature age. He pursued the necessary background studies at school level, and then at several universities, particularly finally at the University of Paris from 1529 to 1534.

When he was not studying he taught others about the "ways of God," and in particular guided others through the spiritual exercises that had been so helpful to him, hoping thereby to avoid in them the many false starts and pitfalls that he had encountered in his own life. Through this guidance he gathered around him a group of companions who formed the basis of what was to become the Jesuit order.

Ignatius, in discovering God in a new and deeper way, had discovered much about himself and the meaning in his life. In him, it was a long and torturous process, with many wrong turns and false starts. He hoped to help others find the same outcome—a direction and purpose in their lives, an inner knowledge and freedom—without the difficulties he experienced. He gradually developed these notes he took into the spiritual exercises:

> When he noticed some things in his soul and found them useful, he thought they might also be useful to others, and so he put them in writing. (Loyola 1992, p. 99)

The Meeting Ignatius program relied considerably on the use of Ignatius' autobiography.

Participants' Reactions

Like the colloquium, it was the methodology of a story, and the relating of that story to one's own life, that was effective.

As one participant expressed it:

> In my first year here did "Meeting Ignatius," which is a four-day experience at Pymble; and I think it was my thirteenth year teaching. And having worked at St Bellarmine's for all that time and never having done that experience, to do it so far down the track, I thought: my God, people should know this earlier. Ignatius was a man of great vision and we all know the superficial story. You know what he was really trying to achieve is important.

And a further comment:

> The most important thing for me was the man himself. He did everything with a passion; and more importantly he wasn't a goody two shoes … The man traveled the same road as you. He might have got closer to God than we've ever got; but in himself he was committed with a passion. His days at university and all those sort of things were done. If you read it, he wasn't a saint; he was an everyday man, who did what he did very well. … but to scratch the deeper aspect of the man he was, and a little bit of saying to the boys that there is more to education than we're teaching you. There's conversation; there's deeper components.

The story of the life and spiritual experience of St Ignatius himself has become a major part of the communication of this characteristic Jesuit vision. Rather than conceptually describing the vision, it is related in the story of Ignatius' own experiences.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the use of a "mythopoetic" pedagogy in communicating a particular vision to staff in a school context. Programs using this approach proved far more effective than more traditional cognitive processes. The effectiveness was related to the use of story, of myth; of recounting a story (in oral presentations in the colloquium or Ignatius' autobiography in Meeting Ignatius), then inviting the participants to apply the story to their own history, and thus to recall and reconstruct their own story, and perhaps transform themselves.

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Chapter 14
Mythopoetic Spaces in the (Trans)formation of Counselors and Therapists

Frances MacKay

Abstract This chapter explores the mythopoetic dimensions of counselor formation and transformation that have emerged from the author's doctoral research on the place of spirituality in counselors' self-narratives, and my experience as a counselor educator. For the purpose of this chapter, "mythopoesis" is seen as a deeper layer in a person's self-narrative, taking us beyond constructivism and social constructionism to create an inclusive narrative, challenging binaries of sacred and profane, truth and fiction, *mythos* and *logos*, individual and collective. Two such mythopoetic narratives are "the passion narrative" and "the liminal narrative". Although derived from research conversations with counselors, and applied to counselor education and professional development, these mythopoetic narratives have applications for lifelong learning in different contexts.

Introduction

I have always been drawn to the mythopoetic, although I would not have known to call it that. I first encountered the word about three decades ago when I attended a national conference on mythopoesis. I cannot remember any attempt to define the term, but I can remember fragments of presentations on the works of C. S. Lewis and George MacDonald, and on *Tristan and Iseult*.

Writing this chapter has been an invitation to explore the mythopoetic dimensions of counselor formation and transformation that have emerged from my doctoral research (MacKay 2004), a decade's experience of educating and supervising counselors, and my own personal and professional narrative. I have chosen to use the word *formation* instead of *development* because it is less linear and more evocative of the spiritual dimension that has emerged through my Ph.D. research (MacKay 2004), and my contact with students and clients. Besides, it allows for the play on words suggesting that transformation is integral to the personal and professional narratives of counselors and therapists. For the purposes of this chapter "counselor" and "therapist" are interchangeable terms.

When I was writing my thesis it was not difficult to discern a mythopoetic layer in the counselor narratives about the place of spirituality in their personal and

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professional development, once I moved beyond the presenting layer of "counselor talk" to a deeper layer of interconnecting images and metathemes (MacKay 2004). Before discussing these narratives, however, it is important to set the scene by opening up the notion of mythopoesis, and by suggesting briefly some mythopoetic spaces in the evolution of counseling theory and practice.

Part One: Foundations

What Is Mythopoesis?

Although it seems against the spirit of mythopoesis to try to define the word, I need to suggest how I am going to use it in this chapter. I do so in the spirit of wanting to open up the discussion rather than closing it down. In popular usage, myth is often seen as the opposite of what is objectively true and real, particularly in reference to "primitive" beliefs about the world that have been replaced by "scientific" explanations. According to this view, myths may be charming, entertaining, but ultimately misleading, because untrue. Etymologically, mythopoesis means the creation of myth or story. The psychologist Jerome Bruner's (1986, p. 11) now classic distinction between paradigmatic and narrative ways of knowing highlights the difference between knowledge that can be gained through science and that obtained through stories or narratives. Paradigmatic knowledge depends on scientific and propositional thought, while narrative knowing depends on a person's construction of experience through narrative. While these may be perceived as complementary, mainstream psychology has reflected contemporary cultural trends by emphasising the paradigmatic to the exclusion of the narrative (McLeod 1997).

This distinction between mythological and scientific explanations of reality has also been taken up by Armstrong (2000) in her account of the evolving relationship between *mythos* and *logos*, which she sees as contrasting but complementary ways of seeing, thinking, and knowing. Armstrong criticises the privileging of *logos* over *mythos* in contemporary western culture, as well as the tendency within fundamentalism to literalize *mythos* in an attempt to translate it into *logos*. Her distinction between *mythos* and *logos* is reminiscent of Freud's distinction between primary (imaginal) and secondary (rational, linear) process.

Like Armstrong, Siegelman (1990), who has completed postgraduate studies in literature as well as psychoanalysis, is also aware of the overemphasis on the rational as opposed to the imaginal in contemporary life. She criticises Freud for privileging secondary (rational, linear) process, and dismissing primary process as "hallucinatory and wish-fulfilling." Siegelman (1990, p. 11) claims that Freud is overlooking the value of the imaginal in the creation of art, literature, and poetry. (This is ironic in that Freud owes much to mythology in his development of core concepts like the Oedipal complex.)

Siegelman not only argues the complementarity of the rational and the imaginal, but suggests that metaphor can be a vehicle for transformation by offering ways of breaking down these and other binary terms. Siegelman claims that "metaphor is essentially a bridging operation, and bridges do not reduce, they connect" (1990, p. x). She sees metaphor as connecting the conscious with the unconscious, the abstract with the concrete, and the affective with the cognitive. Metaphor can also link primary (imaginal) and secondary (rational) process. Metaphor may be seen as a feminine way of knowing in that it is an expansive and inclusive way of knowing, making meaning by connection rather than differentiation (MacKay 2004, p. 88).

The crucial importance of establishing a connection between these two ways of knowing and being resounds in these memorable lines from *Howards end* (Forster 1968, p. 174):

> Only connect. That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted … live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die.

The juxtaposition of prose and passion presents a contrast between head and heart, thinking and feeling or imagining. The association between passion and the poetic, though unspoken, is implied. The *Shorter Oxford English dictionary* defines prose as "straightforward discourse; the ordinary form of written and spoken language; plain, simple or matter-of-fact (and hence) dull and commonplace." Passion of course raises other possibilities, not all of which are comfortable. An excursion into the *Shorter Oxford English dictionary* in pursuit of some of the connotations of passion yielded some interesting clues as to why the poetic is seen as threatening. Passion, among other things, means "overmastering zeal, or enthusiasm," and enthusiasm is defined as "inspired, or possessed by the god, supernatural inspiration, prophetic and or poetic ecstasy," which, in the eighteenth-century Age of Reason not surprisingly was perceived as "ill-regulated religious emotion." It would seem that passion and the poetic are still regarded as a challenge to rationality. The French feminist writer Kristeva links "madness, holiness, and poetry" with the semiotic space, the space associated by the French psychoanalytic writer, Lacan, with "the maternal, considered as pre-oedipal and corporeal," and corresponding to Freud's notion of primary process (cited in Grosz 1989, p. 71). Thus the poetic is seen as subversive, erupting into rational masculine discourse (corresponding to Freud's secondary process), and threatening coherence and control.

The connection between the poetic and depth psychology is clear. Winnicott and Bachelard provide a less threatening and more contemplative notion of this connection. Winnicott refers to the "original poet in all of us," who experiences moments of heightened awareness, which sometimes seem "too much like visitations from the gods to be mixed with everyday thinking" (1971, p. 39). This is similar to what others see as the capacity to see the extraordinary within the ordinary. It is this imaginal quality that enables us to create a mythopoetic narrative from the raw material of our lives.

One way of looking at the mythopoetic aspects of a person's life, then, is to see it as a deeper layering in his/her self-narrative. Bachelard, a philosopher of science and subsequently of poetics, hence well qualified in both *logos* and *mythos*, like

Siegelman, sees the poetic as a primary way of knowing: "Image comes before thought … poetry, rather than being a phenomenology of the mind, is a phenomenology of the soul" (1969, p. xvi). Bachelard (1969, p. 220) cites the poet Rilke to describe a journey of descent deep into the self where, paradoxically, what is most personal and unique is also most universal. In other words, what helps define us points to our deep connection with others.

Holmes helps us to see why we need to connect with both the prose and the passion (poetic):

> The prosaic structure of narrative contains, reassures, soothes—but may also constrain, control, distort. Lyric poetry can be liberation from story, enabling us to see the world with fresh eyes, but its capacity to fragment meaning takes us dangerously close to the limits of misunderstanding. (1999, p. 61)

It becomes apparent that connecting the prose and the passion involves a dynamic lifelong journey involving an ongoing active tension between head and heart, between reason and imagination, between the ordinary and the extraordinary, between conscious and unconscious. The task of mythopoesis is to create (or find) a narrative that can hold the rhythms of the journey: the times of settled narrative, as well as the times of unsettling transition and disruption.

The above paragraph raises the question of whether we construct such a narrative or whether it finds us. At one level we are called to construct the narrative that constitutes who we are, using the social discourses and narratives available to us within our particular culture. Yet there is also a sense in which our narratives find us. Depth psychologists, poets, and mystics remind us that we are shaped by forces of which we are largely unaware. According to Flax (1990, p. 223), the rational Enlightenment self has been decentered by postmodernist, feminist, and psychoanalytic discourses. She stresses the fluidity, complexity, and potential instability of the subject: "The subject is a shifting and always changing intersection of complex, contradictory and unfinished processes. Total access to or control over these processes is an illusion" (Flax 1993, p. 108). Thus we live in a universe of stories, which shape us in ways that are often below our awareness, either because we are not aware of the taken-for-granted assumptions in many of our social and cultural stories that define and constrict us, or because they inhabit the subterranean levels that psychoanalysis calls the unconscious.

Mythopoesis takes us beyond constructivism and social constructionism to create an inclusive narrative that challenges binaries between truth and fiction, sacred and profane, mythos and logos, individual and collective. Such a narrative requires what can be called a metaphoric attitude. A metaphoric attitude acknowledges the bridging function of metaphor, discussed earlier, enabling us to cross barriers, aware of the metaphorical in any attempts to provide theoretical explanations, seeing these as possible explanatory narratives, rather than truth representations to be defended at all costs. In this sense, all theories have more than an element of *mythos* and can never be pure *logos*. Such an attitude is worth cultivating in a world where fundamentalism, which can be seen as literalization of the metaphoric (or mythic), is rife.

An approach that values different ways and sources of knowing is especially important in the education and development of counselors, especially in contemporary

pluralistic and multicultural contexts. So how can this be taught? One way is through the small groups required in counselor education. These provide a unique opportunity not only to learn to respect diversity, but also to experience a deep connection with those who on the surface may seem to be threateningly "other." This may happen through the exchange of stories that occurs in a climate of deepening trust.

It is now time to focus on mythopoetic aspects of the theory and practice of counseling.

Mythopoetic Spaces: Where Psychology, Mythology, and Spirituality Meet

The etymology of psychology as study of soul, and a psychotherapist as one who attends upon the soul, suggests the link between spirituality and psychotherapy. It can be argued that counseling and psychology are not new professions, but new expressions of the archetypes of priest and healer that have evolved in response to a changing social and cultural context. Indeed, McLeod sees psychotherapy as providing the "socially sanctioned form of healing that reflects the values and needs of the modern industrial world" (1997, p. 2), provided earlier and in different social and intellectual contexts by priests, healers, and shamans. The rise of secularism at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries led to a separation between pastor and healer, paving the way for a new secular priesthood of psychotherapists (Frame 2003; McLeod 1997). In attempting to establish credibility as a secular profession, mainstream psychology, especially during the first half of the twentieth century, tended to dissociate itself from philosophy and religion (Shafranske and Gorsuch 1984). Recent decades, however, have seen an acknowledgement by counseling bodies of the importance of the spiritual dimension, reflecting the resurgence of interest in spirituality in contemporary western societies, despite a decline in religious affiliation.

Several writers have emphasised the link between therapy and mythology. Hillman describes the relationship between mythology and psychology as follows: "Mythology is a psychology of antiquity. Psychology is a mythology of modernity" (1972, p. 23, cited in Lukoff 1997, p. 34). Not only is he establishing the origins of psychology in mythology, he is also emphasising the presence of *mythos* in contemporary psychology, despite its claims to speak with the voice of *logos*. His *Re-visioning psychology* (1975), which reinstates the imaginal and the "poetic basis of the mind," begins unequivocally: "This book is about soul-making" (1975, p. ix). The allusion to the poet Keats' description of the world as a "vale of soul-making" (in Rollins 1958, p. 102) seems obvious, and I am reminded of Keats' famous words reminding the reader of the value of unknowing. In a letter to his brothers dated December 21, 1817, Keats wrote: "I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (Rollins 1958, p. 102). This seems to be the antithesis of the categorising, defining spirit of logos.

A number of writers have stressed the importance of mythology for psychological health. May (1991, p. 16), for example, claims that myths are essential to mental health and that their loss has contributed to such societal ills as drug addiction and suicide. In the same book he devotes a chapter to a mythopoetic interpretation of the journey of therapy as a descent into hell, drawing on Dante's *Divine comedy*, presenting Virgil's relationship to Dante as a metaphor of the therapist–client relationship.

Levoy's comments suggesting the value of myths for initiation and transformation can be applied to therapy:

> Myths are metaphors, analogies, stories that get at the heart of human behavior, at profound truths, universal themes, ageless patterns. They are, perhaps, above all, stories of transformation: from chaos to form, sleep to awakening, woundedness to wholeness, folly to wisdom, from being lost to finding our way. They describe the stages of life, the initiations we all go through as we move from one level to another: child to adult, young to old, single to married, cowardly to courageous, life to death, death to life.
> Therapy is about transformation. People often come for counselling during times of transition because they feel stuck or have lost their way. Less obviously perhaps, the practice of counselling and therapy also provides an opportunity for ongoing spiritual, intellectual and emotional growth and transformation for counsellors, for which the cost is the reliving others' crises over and over again (Kottler 2003). As Berger (1995, p. 319) puts it, "There is a significant price to be paid for the front-row seat the psychotherapist has on the human condition". (1997, p. 139)

Part Two: Counselors as Myth Makers and Poets

The metaphor of narrative is often used to describe what counselors do. Therapy is about telling, hearing, and retelling stories. Therapy is described by writers from a range of theoretical persuasions as a process of helping clients construct new narratives to replace the disabling ones that bring them into therapy (e.g. Egan 2002; Lukoff 1997; McLeod 1997; Polkinghorne 1988). What form these narratives take will depend on theoretical orientation. Therapists who value the mythopoetic may use insights and interventions from a range of perspectives, but will not do so prescriptively or reductively. Instead, they will do so creatively, in a spirit of unknowing, respecting the mystery of the client and the healing process.

The mythopoetic layer of narrative is more likely to surface in the disruptions and crises of life. Ordinarily it is largely beyond awareness, making its presence felt through dreams, images, unexpectedly strong attractions and antipathies, and through illness. Moore (2004), who has popularised some of the ideas of Jung and Hillman, suggests a mythopoetic approach towards experiences like depression. Rather than pathologizing the experience as one to be avoided at all costs, he advocates seeing it as an invitation to depth and fluidity, an opportunity to relinquish control and to "give in to the unknowing". This is an invitation to liminal space, which is potentially creative and transformative, although it may be experienced as painful and disruptive. This is not to say that medication and cognitive behavioural strategies do not have a place, and in fact may be needed to make it safe to explore the deeper meaning of the illness.

Furthermore, Hillman sees depression as a "reflection of our culture's addiction to a manic superficiality" (1975, p. 25). He sees one of religion's functions as being to carry our pathologies, and when religions lose sway pathology in the community increases. He also challenges the psychoanalytic notion that pathology points to lack of insight. Using the language of mythopoesis, Hillman says: "The wound and the eye are one and the same … Our complexes are not only wounds that hurt and mouths that tell our myths, but also eyes that see what the normal and healthy parts cannot envision" (1975, p. 107). Both Moore and Hillman claim that pathologies like depression bring gifts of insight that cannot be acquired in other ways. Moore describes depression as a "dark night of the soul," saying our "job is to get close to it and sift it for gold" (2004, p. xvi).

As has already been observed, in assisting their clients to construct new narratives, counselors' own narratives will inevitably be challenged, especially those working from psychodynamic or humanistic perspectives. One way of looking at the mythopoesis of counselor (trans)formation is to see it as a deeper layering in counselors' self-narratives. Since self-awareness is claimed to be essential to ethical practice (e.g. Sue et al. 1998), and use of self in therapy has been generally emphasized in counselor education, especially by those embracing a humanistic perspective, an important aspect of counselor training and development is to encourage counselors to become aware of their own stories, including the myths that inform them. One of the research questions in my doctoral research was to explore how the counselor-participants' personal and local stories (contextualized in place and time, including social and cultural context) connected with the larger stories provided by wisdom traditions or mythology.

I now wish to discuss two examples from my research of mythopoetic readings of the narratives elicited through in-depth interviews of 16 counselors about the place of spirituality in their personal and professional lives. I have called these the passion narrative and the liminal narrative.

The Passion Narrative

The idea of a passion narrative arose from the passion conveyed explicitly and implicitly in the participants' self-narratives. In trying to understand the dynamic of passion in these narratives I drew on the etymology of passion in the *Shorter Oxford English dictionary*, and Game and Metcalfe's (1996) commentary on this word. What had intrigued me was how a word that originally meant passivity and suffering has come to mean life-affirming creative energy in such phrases as "I have found my passion," a phrase used or implied by several of the participants. Game and Metcalfe's comments on the etymology of passion are pertinent to this discussion:

> Passion's first definition in *The Oxford English Dictionary* is the "suffering of pain" … The second definition concerns "the fact or condition of being acted upon or affected by an external agency" … Passion's insistence on pain and fate is so awesome that most of us shelter from its reduced usage. (1996, pp. 2–3)

That last sentence struck me, and I remember thinking that perhaps these counselors were able to challenge "passion's insistence on pain and fate," not by avoiding but by confronting it, sustained by the hope of transformation and transcendence. Such a reading suggests that passion is about transformation and transcendence, a transcendence of the initial role of passive victim of the exigencies of fate, to being not only a creative participant in their own personal transformation, but a companion to others in theirs (MacKay 2004, p. 187).

Suffering, when faced, restores agency and creativity. Counselor training and practice had forced them to face their own pain and transcend it. The passion narrative emerged as a metatheme, bringing together other themes of calling, wounding, healing, and creativity. The notion of calling was implicit: more a retrospective recognition that the personal and the professional, the psychological and the spiritual were interwoven or "entwined strands in their overall narrative, rather than a sense that they were called beforehand by something or someone external to them" (MacKay 2004, p. 268). There was no sense of inflation, rather an awareness of how their desire to become counselors was not only prompted by altruism but by their own quest for self-knowledge and self-healing.

A clue to the source of creativity and energy in these passion narratives is the breaking down of the self–other binary to be found in moments of deep connection:

> So I guess the point where you are meeting another person is where they are really meeting you too. So maybe the addictive part is you're actually getting in touch with your own self … your essence because you are trying so hard to be available to the essence of another.

Even within this small group there was considerable variation in the focus of each counselor's passion. Some were fascinated by being involved in the transformation of individual lives; for others this was not enough. One whom I shall call Kirsten had always chosen to work in challenging contexts. As a new graduate she worked in a maximum security prison with murderers and rapists. Here she had a passion for prison reform. In mid-life she works with male incest perpetrators. In her own words:

> The real thread running through my life is this concern for working with people who are regarded with horror or punished and bringing them to a point of acceptance and transformation … It's a very important visionary way and that's why it's related to my passion.

In many respects the passion narrative is a reworking of the "wounded healer" myth. Obviously, counselors need to be further along the path of healing than their clients, but there is no suggestion that the therapist should be finally healed. "[C]reativity is constantly renewed despite, or perhaps because of the wounded healer's vulnerability" (Miller and Baldwin 2000, p. 258), provided his or her wounds are acknowledged and accepted undefensively.

I would like to conclude this section with the following words of one of the participants:

> It's just the story of my life. It is a passion for me … It's all entwined in my spirituality, and my life story, and my counseling experience … If I was in charge of my life and could map it out and could say what was going to be in my life and what was going to be out of my life, what would I do with this? Would I have that in my life? [Pause] I couldn't be who I am today without that being there. But I wouldn't ask for it. There's a platform for me in being able to sit and hear others' stories, affirm and value, and help them through stuff.

The Liminal Narrative

Liminality is another mythopoetic space. The idea of liminality as a transitional and potentially transformative space has long been of interest to me. I was first drawn to writing about this space when completing postgraduate studies in English literature (MacKay 1992), where wilderness became a metaphor for liminality. When this theme arose in my Ph.D. research, my supervisor introduced me to the work of Victor Turner. The original context of Turner's work on liminality was the anthropological study of Ndembu tribal ritual based on Van Gennep's *rites de passage*. However, his use of poetic and metaphoric language to describe this space highlights its archetypical features and its application to a range of contexts. Turner (1967) was fascinated by the middle phase in Gennep's three phases: separation, margin, and aggregation, which he called *liminal* (from Latin *limen* meaning threshold). For Van Gennep and Turner liminal space is the space between separation and reunion, dying and being reborn. Turner says:

> Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial … Thus liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun and the moon. (1969, p. 95)

Elsewhere, Turner describes liminal space as "fructile chaos, a fertile nothingness, a storehouse of possibilities … a gestation process … It is what goes on in nature in the fertilized egg, in the chrysalis" (1990, p. 12).

Thus liminality is a useful metaphor for those spaces in our lives where the old self-narrative does not fit in any longer, and the new narrative has not yet emerged. Liminality may arise from life transitions, which, although predictable or "normative," may challenge our sense of who we are. Retirement is an example of such a transition. An experience of liminal space can also arise from unscheduled life events that thrust us into the wilderness, such as the unexpected death of a loved one or the breakdown of a marriage. Both kinds of transitions bring people to therapy.

According to Turner, the liminal narrative is a transformational and hopeful narrative. Although it may involve a death, there is the promise of new life. In terms of the ongoing rhythms of constructing and deconstructing, integrating and disintegrating, that are integral to self-narratives (Holmes 1999; Roberts 1999), liminality represents the destructuring phase. Holmes (1999, p. 61) sees a link between structure and the prosaic, destructuring and the poetic; the former fortifies the self, while the latter transforms the self. This is reminiscent of Julia Kristeva's trinity of "madness, holiness, and poetry" (Grosz 1989, p. 71), referred to earlier, where the very threat to coherence and stability is the source of creativity and spirituality.

Although liminal space is potentially creative, it can also be dangerous. For example, there are dangers in liminal space where there are no large-enough narratives (myths) to support someone going through these stages of disintegration. Roberts refers to the value during a disintegrating phase of having a "broader, deeper narrative able to hold the fractured parts together, a narrative scaffold, a sacred and sacramental tale" (1999, p. 12). Such stories "provide holding, containing structures of meaning, when an individual or shared story is coming apart and disintegrating" (1999, p. 12).

So what happens in cultures that have lost these larger holding stories? Some writers, referred to earlier, see the loss of sacred stories as contributing to a proliferation of pathology. For many people postmodern society is an experience of ongoing liminal space, where people are not only without sustaining stories, but also often without the experience of what Victor Turner calls *communitas*.

Winnicott's (1971) notion of holding space is pertinent to this discussion, because his ideas about transitional space are complementary to Victor Turner's notion of liminality. Both Turner and Winnicott claim that creativity and transformation involve the undoing of structures, the letting go of purposive control to let something new emerge. Game and Metcalfe describes this as "the letting go of an integrated and integrating self" (2001, p. 73). The ability to let go of an integrated and integrating self is related to a trust that one will be held in the process.

Winnicott's transitional space and Turner's liminal space are both inter-subjective spaces. For Winnicott cultural experience is located in the *potential space* between the individual and the environment, between the self and other. The intermediate zone always represents the transition from being merged with to being separated from the mother, and "throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living, and to creative scientific work" (Winnicott 1971, p. 14). Mythopoesis belongs to this space.

When writing my thesis I could see how the poetic dissolves, or sometimes more violently challenges the structures of a person's self-narrative, reflecting a letting go of an integrating and integrated self. Thus liminal space in the counselor narratives in my research was signaled by metaphors like dismantling, being severed, being ripped apart, dissolving, melting, floating, being on the edge, journeying, crossing borders, play or flow, wilderness, darkness of unknowing. These metaphors sometimes referred to counselors' own experience, and sometimes to their clients'. One of the participants, whom I shall call Meg, describes her experience of melting and dissolving which occurred when she attended a large international Lifeline conference at an early stage of her formation as a counselor. The presenter had asked the audience to join hands:

> Holding hands in a group with 700 people was an overwhelming experience. It was like all the barriers, like another unfreezing, of all the barriers I'd had against joining with people—at that time I was quite defended in a psychological and spiritual sense. He got us to break those barriers down by holding hands. As soon as I held hands with people on either side, whom I knew, I wept. I wept and wept. I couldn't stop.

She goes on to describe the level of connection she is now able to experience between herself and her clients, using the same imaginal and embodied language:

> For me, in working with a person at a really deep level, the space between us is actually occupied, and that to some extent is a physical connection. I suppose you could describe it as energy.

Another counselor sees counseling as a fluid, liminal, transcendent space:

> I actually experience flow in therapy and that's the experience of losing your sense of time and your sense of ego, being transcendent. [Flow] is where you lose yourself, you lose your watchful self, your ego self in the moment of being.

Another describes a similar experience of the dissolving of a separate sense of self that occurs in moments of beauty, creativity, or deep connection with nature or another person:

> Those moments when you dissolve into—it's easiest to see when you dissolve into something really beautiful, when your self isn't present. It's just what is there.

In addition to a space into which we are thrust by life disruptions or transitions, or transcendent experiences of deep encounter and connection, liminality may also be consciously cultivated space, a time out from business-as-usual for example, travel, holidays, spiritual retreats, practices like prayer and meditation, journal writing, even, or especially counselor training, which we shall look at in the next section. All of these detach us from solidifying routines and structures, allowing new life and creativity to flow.

Implications for Counselor Education and Professional Development

What are the implications of the preceding discussion for counselor education? How can mythopoesis transform our pedagogy? In writing this chapter I am aware how much of this approach runs counter to the current trend in counseling where logos is heard in the emphasis on brief, cost-effective, and evidence-based practice. There is little time and place for mystery and soul in such approaches.

On the other hand, a mythopoetic pedagogy honors soul. Like counseling itself, counselor education can be seen as soul work and inherently transformative. There are many opportunities to create soul space in the intensive small group work required in counselor education. Within these groups stories can be shared, held and allowed to reform. Journal writing can also be a mythopoetic practice, encouraging a different way of seeing, which Hillman calls "seeing through events into their mythos" (1975, p. 51). This is different from diagnosis and analysis, but students may also be encouraged to reflect analytically on their experience in light of theory and cultural awareness.

Mythopoesis also acknowledges different ways of knowing and different sources of knowledge. This does not exclude counseling theories and models, but these will be seen not as ways of finally explaining a person, but as potential resources for understanding them. Jung, Hillman, and Moore, as we have seen, recommend imaginal responses to human suffering. Imaginative literature, film, drama, and sacred writings are also sources of understanding and holding, and may be used to create a transformational learning space. As mentioned earlier, larger stories are needed to contain the destructuring phases of a person's narrative. Palmer (2004) talks about the "third space" that can be created by the use of a poem or a wisdom tale in small groups.

From a mythopoetic perspective, the formation of counselors is a lifelong process, beginning long before formal enrolment in a counseling award, and continuing

long after graduation. That was apparent from my research. What was also apparent was that a mythopoetic dimension already existed in these participants' personal and professional narratives. This mythopoetic dimension was not consciously named or intentionally cultivated by those who had mentored them, but it had evolved from the tradition of self-awareness and self-reflection associated with counselor education. Counselors are trained to reflect on their journeys, both imaginatively and analytically.

The liminal and passion narratives discussed earlier have implications for the initial training and ongoing professional development and supervision of counselors. Training and supervision could be considered opportunities for experiencing liminal space, time out from business-as-usual for counselors to reflect on their personal and professional journeys. Such an intentionally cultivated liminal space will almost inevitably precipitate another form of liminality, the deconstruction of their existing narratives, an experience that may be essential if they are to accompany clients on their transformation journeys (MacKay 2004, p. 285). Even when working in a context that might encourage brief, solution-focused, and problem-management approaches, it is important that counselors are able to provide a safe holding space for their clients.

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Chapter 15
Critical Pedagogy and the Mythopoetic: A Case Study from Adelaide's Northern Urban Fringe

Brenton Prosser

Abstract This paper reports on a series of interviews from within a critical action research study with teachers in Adelaide's northern fringe. These interviews focused on what motivated and sustained teachers who had worked for many years within an area of significant socioeconomic challenge. In the context of a synthesis between critical and mythopoetic approaches to educational practice, the paper explores features of the personal and professional lives of teachers. Among the features that emerge include: the interpersonal nature of the relationship between teachers and students; the complexity and paradox in public schools that seek to achieve accountability through power-oriented regimes of testing and curricula; the presence of emotional labour, love, and hope in teachers' work; and the role of powerful metaphors in sustaining teachers in the pursuit of spaces of social justice in students' school experience. The voices that emerge from these interviews demonstrate that an approach to critical pedagogy that ignores the interpersonal, the imaginal, and the emotional is an insufficient basis for achieving critical aims. The paper contends that the head, heart, and hands are required for socially just middle school reform.

Introduction

This chapter is a response to the question posed by Bradbeer: "Of what significance in curriculum work is the life of, and the life carried by, the person?" (1998, p. x).[1]

It is also very much a response to the questions I face as a critical researcher engaging with the mythopoetic: "While the mythopoetic can live quite happily

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without critical theory, I am not sure that critical theory makes much sense without the mythopoetic" (Prosser 2006b, p. 283).

At a time when we are told increasingly that teaching is the transmission of information or the implementation of a standard curriculum, I see the mythopoetic as a re-emphasis of the place of relationships and lived experience in pedagogy. I understand it as a commitment to maintain a sense of the complex, shifting, and multiple person when considering purposeful human action (such as education). When I think about the mythopoetic, I think about the stories that drive and sustain teachers in their practice, the emotional work that is required in teaching, and the "myths" used to reconcile the everyday paradoxes that teachers face (Bradbeer 1998). While this book demonstrates that there is a diverse range of emphases within the mythopoetic, in this chapter the mythopoetic is presented as the synthesis of three elements. Namely, the emotional labor of teachers involved in identity and pedagogical work through a narrative (or mythical) attempt at sense making of paradox is presented. Thus, in the mythopoetic there is the opportunity to explore emotion and identity in teaching with the goal of a more equitable valuing of the complex and changing persons of teacher and student.

With these introductory thoughts in mind, this chapter examines a number of mythopoetic elements that became apparent during the first year of a three-year critical action research project in Adelaide's northern urban fringe. It attends to the emotional aspects of learning, teacher identity, and the potential insights that students' and teachers' emotional responses provide into the social, political, and historical environments in which teaching is embedded. The impact of recent education reform on teacher identity and the visions and ideals that sustain teachers in changing educational environments are considered, as are the resources teachers use to reconcile resulting paradoxes. It is hoped that this chapter will not only provide insight into the "non-rational" resources teachers use in challenging educational environments, but also how the mythopoetic can involve the head, the hands, *and the heart* in designing more socially just pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy and the Mythopoetic

The emergence of the term "mythopoetic" within debates about curriculum and educational practice was in direct response to perceived limitations of critical orientations. Macdonald (1981) developed his third methodology, called the "mythopoetic imagination," in response to critical and scientific work in education that he saw as overly intellectual, failing to take into account the full human context, and bleeding the life out of student life worlds. In his influential work on the topic, Bradbeer (1998) also suggested that the mythopoetic was about shifting away from politicization of the curriculum and opening up a more complex view of the teacher and student in education. More recently, Willis (2004) described critical models of transformation as specific modes of thinking or skilling that seek to resist possible inequitable arrangements and discursive practices, while the "mythopoetic" was a

broader means to value the life world, its mythic symbolic structures and its complexity (as well as the power of the heart in personal transformation). However, not all agree that critical approaches and the mythopoetic need to be in opposition.

Proponents of a synthesis between critical approaches and the mythopoetic include Holland and Garman (1992). They saw the mythopoetic as a means to involve the aesthetic in critical approaches, and argued that such an interpretation is not discordant with the original conception of the mythopoetic by Macdonald. Also within the heritage of critical approaches, the interest of Adorno and the Frankfurt School in art and the aesthetic as both social critique of the present and portrayal of a better future should also be noted (Jay 1973). Meanwhile, Grumet (1988) considered the place of critique and emancipation through art rather than rational knowledge. She reinterpreted critique at the level of the individual to link the two approaches in personal transformation. More recently, Prosser (2006b) linked the emotional and imaginative with the critical through the concept of critical narrative, which included both the re-narration of individual identity and the use of heuristics to prompt pedagogical change amongst teachers.

Perhaps Boler (1997a, 1999) has put forward the most elaborate argument yet for the coming together of critical pedagogy, imagination, and emotion. She too noted that cultural studies and critical theory have traditionally neglected a systematic study of emotion, usually dismissing it as irrational. Boler argued that traditional Marxist views ignored emotion as anti-rational, while neo-Marxist interests in discourse communities have only begun to acknowledge emotion by claiming rational elements within it. In response, she suggested that critical and cultural studies need to consider the emotional as it is a vital but little understood part of power relations and capitalist modes of production.

To support her argument, Boler turned to feminist critique, which resists the emotion–reason dichotomy, emphasizing emotion as collaboratively constructed and non-gender specific. As a result, she portrayed emotion as socially and culturally constructed within historical power relations (Boler 1997a). Thus, emotion is located in its social and historical context and open for use to explore these relations. For Boler (1999), emotion can not only uncover structural injustice, but also develop a site for political resistance. The coming together of critical orientations and the emotive in educational environments allows students to learn how to articulate their feelings as expressions of what is important, as well as to catalyze transformation by imagining and developing expectations that exceed those offered to them. However, she noted that any synthesis between critical orientations and the emotional needs to be a balanced one. While supporters of a synthesized view such as Barone (1992) and Prosser (2006b) argue for the place of emotion in empathic change through critical story-telling, Boler's work warns of empathy that is inactive and decontextualized.

Boler (1997b) explained that passive empathy may read the world but not change the world; it may individualize collective injustices, and it may create a gap between empathy and action. Goodson (1995) also highlighted this danger in his call for narrative research to avoid the trap of being a series of depoliticized and entertaining stories. By focusing on the emotions of the collective (Boler 1997a, 1999), looking for a semiotics of empathy, and using testimony to connect individuals to their contexts,

Boler (1997b) argued that groups could move beyond guilt and powerlessness to cultivate democracy through empathy. This was a shift from broader notions of power, resistance, and agency in transformation to a more specific focus on the emotive power of hope, anger, and excitement to catalyze change (Boler 1999). As such, it responds to concerns that the rationality of critical theory alone cannot motivate and sustain social change and identity transformation (Prosser 2006b).

While critical theory research is awash with the powerful use of imagery, there are fewer examples of the mythopoetic. However, as Holland and Garman (1992) point out, close scrutiny finds elements of the mythopoetic in the work of Apple, Giroux, McLaren and Shor through both the aesthetic and a socially just imagining that underpins the critical tradition. Notable examples of myth and imagery can also be found in Grumet's (1988) powerful use of language to explore feminism in education, Barone's (1992) reconceptualization of teachers as critical story-tellers, Lather's (1997) work with women dying from AIDS, and Hattam's (2004) consideration of socially engaged Buddhism.

Despite the above examples of aesthetic, emotion, imagery, and myth in critical approaches, the coming together of these as embodied in the mythopoetic has been rarer. One example of the potential for such a synthesis of critical pedagogy, emotion, imagery, and myth is the work of Johnson (1995). Her work with disengaged urban students in California confronted her with their daily experiences of death, grief, and violence. As she searched for a curriculum that integrated with the life realities of students, the death of their brothers, sisters, and friends was an often-recurring theme. Further, the lack of social space for these African-American students to deal with their emotions, as well as the institutional responses to these deaths, emerged as a site for political resistance. As one reads the stories of these students, they engage emotional, mythical, and educative responses around the issue of death in a way that powerfully invokes the mythopoetic.

What the above approaches show is recognition that there is potential for emotion, imagination, and myth within critical pedagogy. While each approach may differ in emphasis, they share an agreement that such a synthesis is possible and may be a factor for social emancipation. It is not the focus of this chapter to unravel the nuances of these differences nor is it to provide a detailed review of mythopoetic elements in previous critical work; instead, I hope to contribute a new example of the synthesis of critical pedagogy and the mythopoetic within a research project in Adelaide's northern urban fringe.

The 'Redesigning Pedagogies in the North' (RPiN) Project

This chapter documents interview findings from a three-year research project in ten schools within Adelaide's northern urban fringe (entitled Redesigning Pedagogies in the North). This region experiences high levels of poverty, early school leaving, and youth unemployment as well as a reduction in traditional career pathways, due in part to the dramatic decline of the manufacturing industry over the last fifteen

years (Thomson 2002). The project commenced in late 2004, involving over a thousand students and thirty-two teachers. The project has been designed to build curriculum and pedagogy that incorporates 'funds of knowledge' (Moll and Amanti 1992) from student life worlds (Roche 1987), to value the 'virtual schoolbags' (Thomson 2002) of students, as well as teach the codes of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1984) in the mainstream curriculum. The pedagogy of the project is critical because it aims to prompt a deeper understanding of the deficit views of students that affect students, as well as provide opportunities for students, teachers, and school communities to unsettle these views. Further, the critical action research method used in the project supports teachers to reclaim their work by producing knowledge and enhancing their expertise over their professional practice.

Due to this orientation, the proposed methodology of the project did not overtly seek to evoke the mythopoetic as part of the initial research plan. However, as the project progresses, the mythopoetic has emerged as a useful means to explore teacher conversations. This process has been organic, with teachers in the project's workshops offering emotive accounts of what drives them to be teachers, stories that reveal their changing teacher identities, and the personal "myths" that have informed their professional growth.

The thirty-two teachers involved in the project represent a diverse range of ages, teaching experiences, subject specialties, and time teaching in the northern suburbs. Initially we asked these teachers to reflect on what they believe to be "good" pedagogy within middle schooling. The consensus of the teachers confirmed an emphasis on relationships (Lusted 1986), authenticity (Newmann et al. 1996), connectedness, and intellectual quality (Lingard et al. 2001; Luke et al. 2003). Based on these discussions, a self-reflection checklist was produced and the thirty-two teachers were asked to use this to reflect on their pedagogy. After completing this task, the teachers participated in discussions, which were transcribed. It was through reading these transcriptions that the presence of the mythopoetic in their accounts came to my attention.

The Emergence of the Mythopoetic in Teacher Reflections

The role of relationships in sound pedagogy was a common theme within group discussions in the project (Brennan et al. 2005). These relationships appeared to work on two levels. Firstly, a strong relationship builds the trust and desire within students to engage with curriculum, while secondly the consequences of such educative interactions are deep, emotional, and lasting relationships (Prosser 2006a). Discussions also reinforced the idea that teachers are much more than deliverers of curriculum to students. One teacher told of the emotional and educational involvements that do not stop at the school gate:

> Quite often, you do know that you've made a difference to a kid because they'll verbalize it, but sometimes it's those students that you don't know that you have that's really empowering, and it really is the little things.

> Once I had a kid, every time I asked him to do something, you know, he'd resist and I said: "Look we need you in the class because…," and he said: "Five bucks miss, five bucks." We had a performance at the end of the year, and I just gave them all $5. He cried. Now he's an 18-year-old boy, and his mother said he hasn't spent it … it's still sitting by his bedside cabinet, you know, and so something really, really little is what makes a difference.

Based on the theme of relationships and teachers' emotional work in pedagogy that emerged in group discussions (Prosser 2006a), this chapter seeks to explore this idea more deeply. It contends that because pedagogy relies on the relationship between teacher, student, and knowledge of a changing world, it inevitably involves both emotion and identity negotiation. It argues that teachers are more than deliverers of curriculum, students are more than outputs of an educational production line and, because the complex and multiple person of the teacher is involved in pedagogical moments, there are significant implications for their emotional work and identity. Further, because teachers invest so much of themselves in educative relationships with their students, teacher identity must have implications for broad educational reform and changes in individual pedagogies.

The Case Study

The remainder of this chapter considers the above argument using a case study of three teachers drawn from within the RPiN project during late 2005. I selected the three teachers because they had demonstrated openness in group discussions to reveal emotional, imaginative, and identity aspects of their work. Veronica, Sharyn, and Bob (pseudonyms) came from different schools in Adelaide's northern urban fringe, two of which were secondary schools. Each of them had worked in the northern suburbs for over ten years, while two lived locally and one lived twenty minutes drive south of their school. All had taught in other places, with Veronica coming from interstate, Bob having taught for many years in a small rural community, and Sharyn having teaching experience in both rural and north-eastern suburbs' schools.

All three teachers are teaching middle year classes. Veronica is a senior primary teacher who radiates passion for her work and her students. In her own words, she is "a busy person by nature" who "never knows when to quit" and her smaller stature belies her great strength and drive. Sharyn is a curriculum line manager in her school, but maintains teaching responsibilities in a middle school (which is located within a secondary school). She stresses that "you've got to find ways to maintain your optimism" and "a sense of humor." It is these qualities that impress you on first meeting her. After having a line manager responsibility in his last school, Bob is enjoying the shift back to teaching both junior and senior secondary classes. While Bob makes free reference to his ethnic appearance and heritage, he sees himself "raised as an Aussie." Bob identifies himself strongly with the northern urban region, having worked there as a taxicab driver for many years before teaching.

All three expressed enthusiasm to be part of the interviews and each expressed satisfaction at having had the opportunity to reflect broadly on their person and teaching practice. These interviews were semi-structured conversations. The data from these interviews was analysed in relation to the key themes elaborated in this chapter.

Emotion, Teaching, and Learning

Until a decade ago, the role of emotion in teachers' work, teaching and student learning was largely unexplored. Notably, Boler (1997a) provided the first overview of the conceptualization of emotion through a review of past approaches to reason and emotion within different paradigms. Her purpose was to provide a foundation for a systematic study of emotion and power relations as well as foster the critical self-reflection on emotion that could cultivate democracy. In such a view schools, curriculum, and pedagogy are vital to imagining a more socially just education.

This interest in emotion coincided with a special issue of the *Cambridge Journal of Education* one year earlier. Most relevant to the concerns of this chapter was the argument put forth by Nias (1996) that, because teaching involves human interaction, it must have an emotional dimension and emotions are not separate from teaching and learning. She argued that emotion and reason weave together in learning and to separate them leads to weaker understandings of teaching and learning. This view is supported by educational research (Boler 1999; Dewhurst 1997) as well as neurobiological research (Damasio 1994, 2000; LeDoux 1992), which highlights the complex relationships between cognitive and emotional parts of the brain. In this view, teaching involves more than teachers rationally and effectively delivering content, while thinking and learning involves both head and heart. Since that time, emotion has continued to be a topic of educational research (Hargreaves 1998, 2001; Nias 1996; Sutton and Wheatley 2003; van Veen and Lasky 2005).

One writer whose work has influenced those imagining curriculum through the mythopoetic is James Hillman. Hillman (1981) used the term "the thought of the heart" to explore thinking and learning that involves both mind and emotion.

> Our hearts cannot apprehend that they are imaginatively thinking hearts, because we have so long been told that the mind thinks and the heart feels, and that imagination leads us astray from both. (Hillman 1981, p. 3)

For Hillman, the "thought of the heart" (which is the thought of images, emotion, and imagination) is central to the "imaginal," which is a more authentic and all-encompassing way of thinking and learning. This idea continues to influence curriculum writers in their exploration of the "imaginal" in teachers' work and lives.

> Hillman's primary attention … [was] to the personal negotiations of every person with dream and disappointment, with hope and fear, with past and future, with self and other, with integration and disintegration. (Bradbeer 1998, p. 14)

For Bradbeer, an exploration of the "imaginal" in teachers' lives offered two possibilities for studying the person of the teacher. Firstly, it allowed one to look at the creativity, emotion, and imagery that bind teachers and students to life and learning. Secondly, it enabled an exploration of how teachers negotiated teacher identity and paradoxes in their classrooms, lives, and relationships.

In my interviews with teachers, numerous examples of the "imaginal" emerged. For Veronica, emotions could not be separated from the life of the school:

> Because of the complexity of the school, and the complexity of the kids and their lives … a lot of the stuff you do is socialization and helping them articulate things that they feel, you know it's either mad, glad, or sad. So emotions play a huge … it affects your whole teaching life in here.

Sharyn also spoke of the emotional implications of working in an urban fringe school:

> You have a lot of sad stories in a school like this, and you often talk with kids just in a casual way, sometime it takes me by surprise, like sometimes you think that nothing else is going to shock you … but then causally a kid will tell you a story about something that has happened on their weekend or in their life that is incredibly sad. I'm saddened again by it … but you, you've got to use those experiences to say "Right, well I've got to give these kids the best I can personally give them."

For Sharyn her teaching has increasingly become about sharing her life stories, self, and emotions. For Bob, emotion is inseparable from the image and essence of being human:

> That's who I am; I am an emotional person. I can't hide it. It's obviously precarious but there it is, and I'm comfortable with that, that I bring it into the classroom. So when I say "emotion" I see a human being. I see everything. I see happiness, angry, loving, caring, rude. The main thing that I want them to see is that I am happy to be here.
> When they are down, I gently pick them up, and when we're on a high we really rock and roll, so it's an emotional ride.

Clearly, these examples demonstrate that teacher emotion is involved in pedagogical moments and educative relationships. This has important implications for teachers' work, but also, as I will discuss in the next section, for teacher identity.

Teacher Identity: An Anchor in the Storm

Recent educational reform in Northern America and Australia has had significant implications for teachers' emotional work and identity. Lasky (2005) explains that those teachers who entered the profession at a time of liberalism and economic well-being (where the rationale of education was primarily about student development) have lived through the impact of an economic recession, and now face a time of managerialism and competition (where the rationale of education is primarily about serving the economy). Her research shows that, despite the pressure from such change, these teachers use their lives to put into action what they maintained

were important, at their own emotional cost. Teachers reported a sense of guilt as they saw themselves as decreasingly effective and feelings of heartbreak because more students were set up to fail. Despite this, the teachers persisted in making themselves vulnerable and open to students because they saw it as central to engagement, learning, and socio-emotional development.

There is also an ongoing tension about what the "right way" to teach is and what the "right sort" of teacher is. This tension emerges because of social, historical, and institutional pressures and their mismatch with the hopes of teachers for education. They negotiate these tensions through teacher identity, with the resultant long-term struggle often leaving teachers emotionally drained and despairing; which raises the important question of how teacher identity is sustained.

Lasky (2005) argues that as the priorities of education have changed there has been an impact on teacher identity. She found that some teachers saw themselves as old, useless, impotent "dinosaurs" by holding on to the values that formed and underpinned their teaching identity. Yet hold on to them they do, despite their formative experiences of teaching and teacher identity being in such conflict with recent change.

For teachers in this study, their core values and notions of professionalism were an anchor in a stormy political and reform climate (Lasky 2005, p. 913). It is precisely because teachers hold on to these formative visions and identities that they find coherence in changing educational environments.

For Veronica, teaching is an active and positive challenge, but she sees educators "being kicked around" in the Australian political climate as adding to this challenge:

> As a teacher, we are public enemy number one. Everybody blames us for everything. You know the sad thing that I perceive as happening is that we are freedom fighting, maintaining our democracy … our policy makers are doing all the things that happened in South America thirty years ago, where you attack the intellectual base and you slowly take away the freedoms, then you demonize the trade unions, and demonize the teachers. We're the demons; we're the people that they kick as hard as they can to stay in power … they kick us collectively, but individually we can still make a difference.

Veronica's early experiences of teaching were formative and sustaining, in part because she fell into teaching at a younger age, almost as a second option:

> I was into all sorts of things—dramatic arts … and my dad just said to me, "That is all very well, it's nice to have dreams, but you actually need something practical behind you" … so I thought, because I went to an all-girl school, and you were trained to be nurses, teachers, nuns, and wives … so I thought that teaching is probably the least disgusting one, so I went to teacher training college, and just ended up becoming a teacher … I hated it. I kicked and screamed the whole way through.

However, Veronica completed the training (she says because of her stubbornness), but still did not want to become a teacher because of the bad image the profession had in the community. This changed once she worked in a school as she found she could "actually do this, and it's not a bad thing, and the more I teach the more I want to be a teacher." As Veronica looks back, she sees how influential early teaching years were:

> As far as my teaching training, I actually came through some glory days, which were really good, so there are practices put in place that I just think are not beneficial for the kids at this school, so … you just come in and do the things that we know … I mean I don't go with the trends.

In fact, she sees herself as a catalyst for putting the individual student needs first:

> I guess I see my role as an agitator, but not in a bad sort of way, but I just think that some of the practices that go on in here, "No, this is only serving the adults in the school; the sole reason we're here is for these children and the job that we have to do with them."

Sharyn also sees her teacher training taking place in the "glory days":

> I know it's a very 70s thing to say, but the reason that many of us got into teaching is because we actually wanted to make the world a better place, and if you don't have these lofty ideals, when the going get's tough, it's harder…
> Unless teachers have the broader understanding about where education fits and how important it is in society, then it's harder to sustain the kinds of energy that I think they need.

Also important for Sharyn was the support she received in the early years of her teaching to develop her pedagogy. She believes the mentoring she received in this area remains vital to her classroom practice as well as sustaining her in her work. Veronica also spoke often of the support from her "teaching friends," while Bob noted the importance of support and mentoring from the principal in his school.

For Sharyn, humor and collegial support have also been crucial:

> I've been lucky enough my whole career to work with other people who have a fantastic sense of humor and also, combined with that, a very genuine commitment to the kids…
> You need to have enthusiasm for life, you need to be generally a more "the cup is half full person" and you need a sense of humor, absolutely.

Bob explained that he became a teacher later in life because he enjoyed teaching in other capacities and wanted to formalize his abilities. He had worked in a number of previous professions and he says that helps him switch off when not at school. He came into teaching aware that it no longer had the high status that it did when he was young (especially, he said, because he came from an ethnic background), but that does not worry him as he still believes that teachers play an important part in society. However, for Bob it is his formative experiences as mentor and coach that came with him into teaching that now sustain him in his teaching:

> My personal belief is whether you are a teacher, coach or anybody, if you have a philosophy it helps … If someone is coming hard at you, you can either go hard back at it, and hope you are stronger than the person, or you can shift your body and see the hard as it goes past, so yeah, that's my type of philosophy … and living now. What happened yesterday is finished.

Meanwhile, Veronica described her philosophy of needing to "love the students" so that you can support them. Such observations link to Liston's (2000) exploration of sustaining teacher identity through the consideration of emotions in teaching. Drawing on Palmer, Liston specifically explores the potential of love to empower and sustain teaching.

> If we are to hold paradoxes together our own love is absolutely necessary—and yet our own love is never enough. In a time of tension, we must endure whatever love we can muster until that very tension draws a larger love into the scene. (Palmer 1998, p. 85)
> In paradox we reach for an enlarged love, one that, we hope, can embrace and endure the tensions entailed in our teaching dilemmas. (Liston 2000, p. 94)

For Liston, teachers need to overcome struggles in their teaching by loving their work, their students, and their teacher identity more deeply. By drawing on the emotive, symbolic, and mythical notion of love, they can find sustenance.

While such views on sustaining teacher identity are mythopoetic in their emphasis on deeply held values, images, and emotion, it would be inaccurate to present them as critical views as they do not engage deeply with socioeconomic and institutional pressures. To take a critical orientation is to adopt a particular social and historical view on resisting hegemony and unjust power relations.

Imagery and Myth in Critical Pedagogy

As the previous section alluded to, teacher identity exists within a context of paradox, power, ideology, and dominant institutions. As van Veen and Lasky (2005) noted, the emotional journey of teachers and their identities are not separate from these contexts and can provide insights into the social, political, and historical environments in which their teaching is embedded. It is here that examples of critical pedagogy, imagery, and the mythopoetic can begin to be seen in the reflections of teachers.

One prominent social influence on teachers is the negative stereotypes about teaching in Adelaide's northern urban fringe:

> That's interesting how we talk of [teaching in the north] in terms of sentencing. It's funny how teachers do that. It's not horrible teaching out in the north; it's hard work and it's really challenging, but I think that keeps you real as a teacher. (Veronica)

Part of making this difference is tempering the implications of policy decisions for her students:

> Like when the students are doing the literacy and numeracy tests … you don't say "This is a game we are playing today," but you explain to them what it is about, who wants it, who is going to use it … "But just remember that it's only a tiny little vision of how I see you." (Veronica)

With the students, Bob does use the "game" image to represent teaching and learning:

> I make the kids aware it's a game … you want to play the academic game you play it. You want **to play the vocational game, you play it, but make up your mind**, choose a path and run with it.

Bob does not accept the stereotype that students in the north of Adelaide cannot understand and play the game.

> We get the image that [the kids in] the north aren't academic—what a load of rubbish … We've got kids here that people think don't work—rubbish, they work. When we get them out on work experience they shine.

Part of this is opposing deficit images about the students, school, and community:

> I said [to the students] "When people see us as working class, or low socioeconomic area, being working class is a pretty important thing. We should be proud of it because the working class denotes that when the job needs to be done, we do it, we roll up our sleeves, we don't complain, we just do" … our kids shouldn't be embarrassed by it; they should be extremely proud. (Bob)

Sharyn also seeks to resist deficit images:

> It's actually about opposing the deficit model of "We're a poor suburb, or we don't get the funding we need, it's really sad, it's really inequitable, and therefore it is going to be difficult for our kids to achieve," and those things may be true but they don't get you very far … the culture of this school has been building a rhetoric that breeds success … If you start to feel successful, you feel better about yourselves and you will become successful, that kind of cycle.

Veronica agrees, but also notes some challenges for education in the north:

> It's not that poor kids can't learn, but if you wake up in your nice middle to upper class home and mummy has made you breakfast, and your clothes are fresh, and you've had a good nice sleep because your room is upstairs and you can't hear the noise downstairs, and you live on a big block of land where you don't have much contact with the neighbors and you "choof off" to school with your belly full and with a lovely lunch box, I mean of course you are going to do better than a kid who drags himself to school with no sleep … It's like when a horse starts a horse race, like they're weighted and what we need to do is make sure we are weighting education so that all kids are starting here even.

Bob's "heartache … is [in] the unsaid racial tension" in his school community, which he sees as a greater barrier. He uses the imagery of sowing to reconcile it to himself:

> Once they get together they just want to be out and away from each other, and so I let them be, and this is one of the conflicts I have because I have to have all the kids in the same classroom. I've got a glass window so I can see them outside, so I let them be out there … sometimes they are in the computing room which is naughty of me … Look with the tens and elevens, I really can't change their way … so with my eights I'm a little more vocal so that the seed gets planted…
> The point is that it is a seed, if someone else says it or it's in their mind as we mature and we start thinking a bit, it might click.

What the above examples highlight is the potential of emotion and imagery as a site to explore and resist injustice (Zembylas 2003). They show the tensions that result from a clash of contexts and teacher values through simple metaphors or images. Over many years, these struggles can "affect your energy levels" (Bob), "make you feel disillusioned" (Sharyn), and "get under your skin, then you are done for" (Veronica). Some writers have portrayed this process through the images of "spiritual pain" (Dubus 1996) or "the windblown soul" (Freedman 1990). To consider such things within the life of teachers one needs to move beyond simple imagery, embrace the paradoxes in teaching, and explore deeper mythopoetic response.

Paradox and the Mythopoetic

Bradbeer (1998) is helpful in considering this path in his identification of images, metaphors, and powerful personal stories that teachers use to find coherence within paradox. Within the concept of "metaphysical praxis," he sees the site where thought and feeling together enter the world and where resolution is found through "myth" (rather than logic alone). In his work, he seeks to identify examples of this in teacher responses to recent school reforms in Victoria. For Bradbeer, metaphysical praxis is the way that one can link the grand theory of the mythopoetic with the everyday lives of individuals.

Examples of the mythopoetic were also apparent in my interviews with teachers. For instance, Bob approaches the contradictions of teaching through a philosophy of acceptance rather than resistance and struggle. He uses powerful myths drawn from eastern religion through his experience of karate to inform his teaching practice. For example, when he is expected to give core exams to students on modified programs he worries that he is setting them up to fail. Nevertheless, Bob resists competition and measurement, guiding them through the test and taking the responsibility on himself for not giving an exam.

Bob also opposes the idea that students should stay in one classroom and resists the pressure to monitor student movement. He allows students to move around the school because they are working on things at different levels, even though he knows he is "breaking school policy." For Bob it is a matter of trust:

> I do trust them. I might get kicked in the gut, but I'll pick myself up and get kicked again. If I get kicked in the gut, I'll wear it rather than the kids suffering and I see that I am a bit of a buffer between policy and students.

This image of taking hard knocks and picking yourself up when teaching draws on a deeper metaphor of karate:

> You just accept it, it's what teaching is … it is a grind, teaching is a grind, but I have a philosophy that life is a grind.
> When I am doing a particular technique and I'm having difficulty as is expected, because I am a westerner, I said to my sensei, "This is hard, please help me. What's an easy way?" and all he said was "Yes it is."

Bob uses the same philosophy with his students when they find school or learning difficult by replying "Yes it is".

> This is a movement; it is a journey, it is a path I suppose, but it's the way. I mean to get that, because as I say to my students, karate, or what was originally what they called "karate jitsu"; it was hurting people, killing people, it was a way to defend yourself from the warriors, so if you train that way, by definition, and we're fighting each other, and I've got ten students, the next night I should only have five because they should have killed these people, if you're going to the full extent of the art. I said "No, what we do is the way of it," in other words, we pull our punches, we stop. We can still do it, but we're learning, because if I've killed you, you're never going to learn again…
> So it's the way of doing it is probably more important that the doing, if that can be understood … So I suppose the examples I have given is that "This is boring," it is because doing repetitious techniques is boring, but it's got an outcome, even if it is "Gee, I feel good when

> I stop!", it's an outcome. It's fantastic—I got that from a mate of mine. He said "Mate, the only good thing about hitting your head against the wall is when you stop you feel better." That's an interesting concept, isn't it, and it's getting back to "Yes, sometimes it is hard," that philosophy.

Another aspect of this philosophy is Bob's sense that it is his responsibility to be in the right frame of mind and maintain sensitivity to the students:

> If we can learn to accept, then I think it's powerful, a powerful way of getting through your life … I learnt that the only time I am in trouble was when I was in a bad mood and … I try to remember that every time I walk through the door [into the classroom] that I have to be in a good mood … and to give and to receive and to give to them.

For Bob, the notions of acceptance, giving, and receiving have great power. Patience and hope are also an important part of his teaching. Veronica agrees:

> The whole profession is hope isn't it? I mean you like to think that you do make an impact, whether it is positive or negative, but everything we do is hope.

Veronica's hope is also in creating greater social equality. She sees her role in the community to help people not be "hoodwinked by things, and believe things without stopping and thinking." The symbolic resource she draws on to understand this is her class origins.

Veronica identifies her father's trade unionist background and her convent schooling as highly influential. Interestingly, it was not the teachings of Catholicism that resulted in her social justice values:

> It was about the girls I went to school with … they'd take me home and go "Mum, this is my friend, she is poor," so I was like their token poor friend, but I think that didn't make me want their life, it made me realise there were fights to be fought.

It is within the context of her story of class that she explains why she teaches in the north. She feels that the "kids are more real" and that it probably is because she comes from a similar background.

The images that support the mythopoetic rendering of Veronica's teaching experience are those of struggle and battle. The nature of the fight is inherently political in her mind:

> I guess the whole thing is just paradoxical really, isn't it? Because everything about this job, and everything about the climate in education at the moment is paradoxical, and so you're being told all these things that you have to do, or "We're going to hit you with a big stick," and it's a big financial stick and it's massive, but the whole thing is paradoxical because it's, you know, it's a joke really, isn't it?
> I don't think a lot of younger teachers realise, and that might be just because they're young, and they don't know any different, or it could be that I don't think young people nowadays are political enough, like they don't take enough notice about what's going on in the world, and they don't … and that's everyone's fault, they don't know the history of why we're here, and what we do … I think a lot of people in their twenties have come through the system of learning to earn, and I do often wonder, like the differences in that they have been educated in that way and it's now starting to become reality, so you forget about those simple things, like community and working for the common cause, and things like … imagining yourself to be the poorest person in the world, and what would you do about that. I actually think that the curriculum that has been created for the economy, is starting to take effect in the lives of young people, and it worries me that young

> teachers … like they've learnt this through their education, and now they're coming to educate kids in that same sort of way, and that just frightens me a little bit, if that's the future.

Not surprisingly, it is also through this political lens that Veronica understands the challenges facing public schools in her region:

> I guess that there are a number of things happening around at the moment. One there's the beautification of the north, I mean what the hell does that mean? So basically what they're doing is they're moving out families, giving houses a fresh lick of paint and then selling them on to the middle class, so while that is all very nice and noble, what actually happens is that we're losing kids left, right, and centre, and that's not being recognized [in our funding] and that it's not our fault, that it's government policy…
>
> They're ripping the guts out of our budget, so we're losing staff that we shouldn't be losing; we're losing budget money that we can't afford to lose because a lot of our money goes on social programs… and the people that they're trying to attract are not people who are going to send their kids to a public school, because of the perception of what these schools are like.
>
> So they'll send them to an independent school, or they'll move in people that don't have children. And then what that does … and even if the middle-class kids do come here, what that does to the kids that we teach is that it hides poverty, so we still lose funding, and we lose programs, and we lose the very things that these kids need in order to, you know, some of them just need it to survive from day to day. I mean that makes me really angry in the aspect that, you know, "Look at this wonderful thing that we're doing," but they're not thinking about the whole impact that it has on the people in this community, and especially the kids that come to this school.

However, class and politics are not the only mythopoetic resources that Veronica draws upon. She also has a strong self-story around motion and busyness. She describes teaching as a profession in which you cannot stay still, which she says suits her. The constancy of this can be demanding and she worries that she might burden others with it. To help her in this Veronica uses her drive home from school to partake in a process of self-storying:

> I write books in my head. I write scenarios that happen … it's my way of talking to people, because I don't like to go home and burden the household … The novel is "the day I had" … I don't like to tell people about that, so I'd rather deal with it in the scenarios that happen than to bore people … I think it is a way of dealing with things.

Her role as parent has also been important to her in that it informs how she envisions her teaching and experiences with students. For her it has changed her relationships with students to help her see them as individuals and accept them. She also compares what she is doing with her students with how she would like her own children to be taught.

Sharyn expressed similar sentiments about the impact of seeing oneself as parent and teacher:

> I have a son who is nearly fifteen; that's highly motivating for me as a teacher. I want to be the kind of teacher that I would expect him to have in his high school … and the kids I teach, I want them to have the sorts of experiences that I want him to have at school … my son had a teacher he adored in primary school. He knew all about her life and family and he adored her … he was engaged by her and felt privileged. I've always been a bit guarded … I want to be more like that.

This sharing of herself aligns with Sharyn's belief that the role of teaching is "to nurture souls":

> I would say that religion hasn't been very important to me, but the old idea … of the human spirit, that's something I really do believe in and that's something that shapes my decision to be a teacher and to work towards the common good … it's important in terms of sustaining optimism.

Sharyn maintains that optimism through a commitment to making the world a better place, which she builds on her humanist values. She describes herself as "teaching for world peace and to solve world problems" and believes in people's freedom to do as they wish as long as they do not harm others. She believes in valuing the person and tries to contribute in "a more altruistic level to the way society is." Sharyn also holds to a sense of everyone having a fair go, with the same opportunities and experiences, and teachers supporting students by developing real relationships. However, this is not an easy challenge and she recalled recent disillusionment:

> At the end of last year, I finished with the group of students. I had had them for five years in my care group, worked quite hard with them all, throughout those five years, and a few of them dropped their bundle just at the end, just before they were sitting exams, or just before they had to hand up final assignments, and it was to do with stuff that was going on in their life, but in their personal and family life, but it made me feel a bit disillusioned …
>
> Well it made me think "Gee, we've worked so hard here, we're really achieving," because when the department asks you to do the annual report, it's all about SACE results, retention, and I started to feel like the kind of work we were doing, it wasn't being reflected in the measurable outcomes that the department was asking us for. It was in other ways that we were measuring. Yeah, so I started to feel a little disillusioned because we'd been working so hard…
>
> And I guess it was the end of a five-year period of that care group, and I was starting to think "Gee, it is actually pretty hard, can I sustain another bout of time?" … but I caught up with some of those kids from my care group, and they all managed to find really successful kind of outcomes. Some of them went to TAFE; a couple did go to uni, even though it wasn't perhaps the course that they wanted but it turned out quite well, and one of the girls I had, who just ran into me in Rundle Mall, came and gave me a big hug, and said thanks. I said "What for?", and she said, "Between Year 9 and 11 I was suicidal, and seeing you there every day kept me alive."

In the examples above it is apparent that because teachers and students invest themselves in educative relationships, how the teachers see themselves and their role has important implications for redesigning their pedagogy and sustaining their teaching. However, their mythopoetic response to recent changes in educational priorities also has a large impact on the success or otherwise of these initiatives. As Lasky (2005) notes, besieged teachers who are struggling to hold on to what they believe is important are more likely to be reform mediators than reform innovators. If critical pedagogy is to play a role in teachers resisting injustice and promoting socially just educational reform, then it too must consider the emotional, imaginal, and mythical lives of teachers.

Summary: The Head, Hand, and Heart of Critical Pedagogy

The interviews that are the foundation of this chapter were conducted at the end of the first year of a three-year research project. As a result, there remains plenty of opportunity to confirm the following observations with more interviews of greater depth with these and other teachers in the project. In particular, there is within the teacher responses a tension between emotion as a site of affective resistance and emotion as a negative construction that signifies the times, which deserves further consideration. Further, future interviews would benefit from a closer examination of the connections between student–teacher relationships, curriculum learning, and learning about life. With these qualifications in mind, there appear to be six emerging trends within these accounts of teachers working in Adelaide's northern urban fringe.

Firstly, teachers did not feel they had the time to think deeply or broadly about their work. They also confess some hesitance to do so:

> Well it's hard because if you try to think too much, you might actually think of reasons not to be here, not to do this. (Veronica)

However, when the teachers took the opportunity to reflect on their lives and pedagogy there was evidence of them drawing on underlying mythopoetic resources.

Secondly, there is evidence of something that most educators know, but some political leaders and policy makers are reticent to admit. These teacher accounts show that there is much more to teaching than banking information, delivering set curriculum, and implementing standardised tests. Relationships are central to pedagogy and involve the complex and multiple persons of teacher and student. One aspect of this that was apparent in the interviews is the emotional involvement of teachers. While this varies from teacher to teacher, those committed to teaching long term in challenging socioeconomic environments speak of engaging in significant emotional work.

Thirdly, these interviews produced evidence to support Lasky's (2005) observation that the formative experiences of teachers are vital to teacher identity and ongoing teaching practice. All three teachers spoke of how the values they brought with them into teaching and the beliefs about education that were prevalent at the time of their training continue to influence them (despite recent changes). Further, there was evidence of the clash between their formative values and current contexts producing emotional work and requiring some sort of practical and philosophical response. For one it was composing a novel of her day, for another accepting "the way," and for the other the nurturing of souls.

Fourthly, shared images such as "pathway" and "game" had currency amongst the teachers. While these images would appear to emerge from institutional sources and to be used widely, it would seem that these teachers made a choice about how powerful these images were to them. For some, like Bob, these images were adopted into a deeper philosophical framework and worked mythopoetically.

> In karate it's called "the way of karate" and that's what my teaching is, it's the way of teaching, it's the way … It's a journey along the pathway…

> If they find their pathway, we support them and are happy for them … because, for myself, I'm still finding my pathway.

Fifthly, the interviews showed evidence of a philosophy that sustained them in their work in Adelaide's northern urban fringe. This philosophy gave them a means to contextualize their emotional effort and attempt to reconcile the paradoxes of their teaching experiences. It enabled teachers to mediate their emotional reactions through a connection to a larger social imagining, be it social justice, eastern religion, or liberal humanism. Thus, the three teachers revealed philosophies that held emotive power, drew on imagery, and evoked narratives that verged on the spiritual. In their accounts, there was clearly evidence of the mythopoetic at work, sustaining and shaping these teachers and their practice.

Finally, the interviews offered some insight into the conditions required for teachers to redesign and reinvigorate their pedagogy. While it is still too early in this project to see the impact of specific pedagogical changes during the last year, there are common factors in the teacher accounts of changed pedagogy. These include:

- The presence of a supportive colleague or mentor within the school
- An openness to engage with school community contexts
- Both practical and philosophical means to manage the emotional work that comes from the daily demands of teaching and pedagogical change
- A strong sense of teacher identity that is sustained by a sense of their place as teachers in the world

The above findings are a challenge to those within critical approaches who would emphasize the rational in critical pedagogy and social change. If pedagogy is relational, as these teachers attest, then it should consider both the rational and emotional aspects of learning. As a consequence, critical pedagogy must consider the insights that teachers' rational and emotional responses provide into the social, political, and historical contexts in which their teaching is embedded. Further, it would seem that pedagogy must embrace the sustaining visions and images that help teachers reconcile the paradoxes between their teaching ideals and current educational contexts. Meanwhile critical pedagogy must consider how emotional labor and associated "myths" might facilitate or obstruct changing pedagogies and contribute to socially just reform. If critical theory is to reinvigorate and redesign pedagogy, it must consider how the complex person can empower that reform through head, heart, and hands. Thus, the mythopoetic emerges as an important area for further consideration by critical scholars.

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Chapter 16
Capacity and *Currere*

Mary Doll

> *For archetypal psychology, the vertical direction refers to interiority as a capacity within all things.*
>
> (Hillman 1985, p. 29)
>
> *Titania waked, and straightway loved an ass.*
>
> (Shakespeare 1998, 3.2)

My first epigraph above speaks of an arena little talked about these days of terrorism, acrimony, and road rage. It speaks of interiority, that which is within all things and so has "capacity." The word "capacity" interests me. Capacity suggests wideness, not narrowness; openness; space for possibilities not yet even imagined, or if imagined done so with a tremble. Capacity puts aside the correcting mind with its focus on the gold, the known end, public acclaim, drive, the impetus to demolish one's opponent. Capacity is no friend of standards or accountabilities, opinion polls, common sense, facts, competition, and the like: those are the hobgoblins of small minds. Capacity does not truck with lobbying. Instead, capacity holds room for unknowingness and peculiarity. Capacity is fearless in its embrace of the other inner side of things. These days there is plenty to fear without, but there may be another kind of fear that shuns verticality because of the panic of self-discovery. As Gaston Bachelard puts it, "We need to unlearn our fear of the life within, the fear of temptation, the fear of our deepest instincts" (2002, p. 307).

My second epigraph is taken from Shakespeare's romantic comedy, *A midsummer night's dream*, which concerns a confusion of identity. Titania, queen of the fairies, has been put under a spell. Upon waking, she will fall in love with whatever she first looks on,

> Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
> On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,
> She shall pursue it with the soul of love. (Shakespeare 1998, 2.1., pp. 180–183)

Improbably, she wakes and sees a commoner disguised as a donkey. And so, she falls in love with an ass. Some see the play as ridiculous, others as lacking in morals, others still as a commentary on bestiality. "Does one remember the play for orgiastic bestiality?" questions Harold Bloom (1998, p. 163). Bloom's book, *Shakespeare: the invention of the human*, is pertinent to my focus because of what Bloom sees

T. Leonard, P. Willis (eds.), *Pedagogies of the Imagination,*

Shakespeare doing in all his plays. Shakespeare *invents* the human. He widens our understanding of what and how we become human beings. To fall in love with an ass is not to celebrate bestiality but to wonder at how, where, when, what we can allow ourselves to love. Love's capacity is greater than the judgmental mind. "Does it make any difference at all who marries whom [in the play]?" Bloom asks. "Shakespeare's pragmatic answer is Not much" (1998, p. 163).

To the outer world, of course, it does matter who loves whom. It matters so much that schools enforce standards of behavior and culture shapes attitudes and morals. An amendment to the United States Constitution, even, is seriously being proposed to protect marriage against some people loving and wanting to marry some other people not deemed morally fit. Identity is formed, often against one's instincts, by such enforcing, shaping, and amending. But dramatists, fiction writers, poets, artists, curriculum theorists, and other deep dreamers have for some time now countered the movement to flatten identity. What a bold and fearless enterprise we dreamers dream! The problem is keeping the dream alive when we awaken to the beast. And so I herald *currere* to protect us from the curriculum (Pinar et al. 1995, p. 596); *currere* to welcome us to "capacity."

My remarks are occasioned by a theater event Marla, my partner, and I attended while in London two summers ago. We saw Edward Albee's *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia*? a play about a man who falls in love with a goat. The problem with synopsis, of course, is that the play is not "about" that at all, although a man does fall in love with a goat. "Aboutness" can only circumscribe the action, not tell the inside of the story. While some condemn the play as deeply weird (my uncle, a proper man, found it inexplicable) others quite rightly see it as one of the most intense theater experiences of our time, not only exploring issues of identity but forcing us to travel inside the human psyche, where we may not wish to go. Albee himself had this to say: "[*The Goat*] is about the limits of our tolerance; what we will permit ourselves to think about … and I consider that to be political" (Drukman 2002, p. 1). For me, the experience of being in the theater that afternoon, watching the improbabilities unfold, rocked my every expectation. The superb, believable acting transported me to another person's core self. I did not think the actors were acting. And it was the theater, a created space and place for transformation, that in the matter of a mere hour or two ruptured years and years of assumed values. I believe such a response is what Madeleine Grumet (1978) refers to as the collapse of the figure into the ground.

Albee would seem to be a curriculum theorist extraordinaire. "The function of all the arts [is] to put us in greater contact with our possibilities" (Brown 2005, n.p.). Since curriculum as I see it is part of "the arts" we need the sort of revolution of consciousness that any profoundly interesting work should excite. Typically, Albee's drama features a heterosexual couple, to situate the play squarely within an accepted lifestyle of two seemingly normal people. What happens to them could happen to us, the assumption is. Martin, a world-famous architect, is being interviewed about his long, successful career, by his friend Ross. But Martin is strangely distracted. He cannot seem to remember anything, slaps his forehead a lot, loses track. He seems at first to be having a midlife crisis, something his middle-aged audience would understand and sympathize with. There is, however, the sense that something more

is behind his absent mindedness. We begin to suspect why: just before Ross comes in with camera and microphone for the interview, Martin tells his wife that he is in love with Sylvia. "Sylvia? Who is Sylvia," Stevie, his wife, demands. "She's a goat. Sylvia is a goat!" Martin responds. The stage directions read: *Acting manner dropped; normal tone now, serious, flat* (Albee 2003, pp. 9–10).

The actors take their cues from the stage directions that emphasize tone and gesture, such that what could be pornography becomes by their acting skills an exploration of pathology. Albee throws us into the territory of myth, where story lines twist around human misbehaviors of the grossest kinds: matricide, fratricide, patricide, infanticide, suicide, incest, carnal relations with animals, humans becoming animal, gods raping mortals, gods raping animals. All these mythic twists, however, are disguised by metaphors, lest the meanings become too clear. We tell myths to children at bedtime, turn the page, and go on with our lives. Nevertheless, myth, above all, *is* metaphor, offering for those with eyes to see the under-layers of human action. There, in the shadows, various states of otherness lie ready to make claim and awaken consciousness to that which causes the ego to slumber. Upon waking we might, like Titania, fall in love with the beast. Theseus, the patriarch in *A midsummer night's dream*, says in the final act:

> Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
> Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
> More than cool reason ever comprehends. (Shakespeare 1998, 5.1., pp. 4–6)

Cool reason does not want to go there. Cool reason is fearful of the soul's sense of such things as weakness, inferiority, mortification, masochism, darkness, disgrace, shame, failure, and the like (Hillman 1985, p. 22). The metaphor for some of these subterranean emotions belongs mythically to Pan, the hairy goat god.

Pan is manifested by events that could force us out of civilized habits. Hillman explains: "Pan never died … he was repressed … He lives in the repressed which returns … and is associated [with] erotic, demonic, and panic qualities. We are returned by instinct to instinct" (Hillman 2000, p. 27). Hillman concludes:

> Self knowledge recognizes the presence of Pan in the obscurest caverns of the psyche and that he belongs to it. It means further that self knowledge recognizes that Pan's "horror" and his "moral depravities" also belong to the soul. This insight gives the goat its due. (2000, pp. 79–80)

Speaking on the state of midlife crisis, psychologist Murray Stein (1983) gives another perspective of what can happen to the interior at midlife: "When the soul wakes up during liminality and comes loose from the bonds of attachment and loyalty to a traditional community," Stein writes, "it shakes itself free as well from the somnolent effects of psychological habit, patterns, and identifications. A person is now able to experience the 'gorges' and 'abysses' of existence and to enter into 'unbelievable love affairs' " (Stein 1983, p. 137).

I think here of the illustrations by Gustave Dore of Dante's *Inferno*. The story of the soul's journey into hell comes before the eyes as a wondrous adventure into a stranger-than-strange place. This place is gorgeous, literally carved out of gorges. And who should lead the pilgrim Dante into the land of the underworld

but Virgil, the Roman poet of myth. In most of Dore's drawings we see the two figures, Virgil and Dante, etched either in white or black, viewing the various figures that inhabit the inferno. Dore gives the underworld its sense of depth by creating the necessary gorges and abysses of which Stein speaks. Karl Karenji (1976), writing earlier, also speaks of mythic adventure as a confrontation with an intensity of dramatic depth and chiaroscuro: "The gorges over which the volatized one passes like a ghost can be the abysses of unbelievable love affairs" (Karenji 1976, p. 14). If one cannot read the myths as they are meant, metaphorically, then seeing Dore's illustrations opens the eyes to a vast depth quality, call it capacity, of interiority. Myths, Hillman (1985, p. 20) reminds us in Grumetian terms, do not ground, they open.

This diversion into the underworld is intended to defuse any too-literal understanding of Albee's *The goat*. While it is true that Martin fucks Sylvia, it is also true that Albee is exploring a psychological dimension not usually welcomed by audiences.

> Ross: (*After a respectful pause*). I almost dare not ask this, but … who is Sylvia?
> Martin: I can't tell you.
> Ross: Who else but me. You can't tell Stevie, it would…
> Martin: NO!!
> Ross: Then, who is she? Who is Sylvia? *(Martin pauses; goes to wallet, brings out photo, looks at it, hesitates, then hands it to Ross, not looking as he does so. Ross takes photo, looks at it, double takes, begins a huge guffaw, which become a coughing).*
> Martin: (*Shy*). Don't laugh. Please; don't laugh.
> Ross: *(Staring at photo; straightforward)*. This is Sylvia.
> Martin: (*Nods*.) Yes.
> Ross: (*Pinning it down*). This is Sylvia … who you're fucking.
> Martin: (*Winces*). Don't say that. (*It just comes out*). Whom.
> Ross: … with whom you're having an affair.
> Martin: (*Soft; nodding*). Yes. (*Pause*.) Yes. (Albee 2003, p. 22)

The discrepancy between Ross's mocking incredulity and Martin's udder (pardon the pun) seriousness points up a difference of capacity. "All profound life is heavy with the impossible," George Bataille (1988, p. 58) observes. Bataille's comments on inner experience might serve as a gloss on the preceding dialogue, which mixes humor with the unfolding of a shocking truth. Martin, the goat fucker, is prissy about language. Yet it is he whose words cannot explain his crisis. Bataille writes:

> Communication still is, like anguish, to live and to know. The extreme limit of the "possible" assumes laughter, ecstasy, terrified approach towards death; assumes error, nausea, unceasing agitation of the "possible" and the impossible and, to conclude … its absorption into despair. (1988, p. 39)

Indeed, Martin is in profound trouble with his best friend Ross, his wife Stevie, and with the traditional prohibition against non-heterosexual (to say nothing of non-human) love objects. Even Martin's gay son Billy (who is not a goat) is repulsed by his father's aberration, as, no doubt, is the viewing audience.

In order to soften the shock value, Albee writes some hilarious lines and actions into the script. The comedy serves as a kind of a scapegoat (sorry) for the inevitable tragedy that is to come. The fact that Martin is upper class, suc-

cessful, educated, heterosexual—one of them viewing us?—makes his situation all the more intriguing; for it suggests that we, too, could go over the edge, or that we will feel pity and fear rather than disgust since we can relate to him on some level. Who of us has not chafed against social constraints as these restrict desire? Freud remarks that the most "normal" sort of sexuality, heterosexual genital love, "is itself restricted by further limitations, in the shape of insistence upon legitimacy and monogamy. Present-day civilization makes it plain that it will only permit sexual relationships on the basis of a solitary, indissoluble bond between one man and one woman, and that it does not like sexuality as a source of pleasure" (Freud 1961, pp. 57–58). Albee's "take" on the discontent of one heterosexual, monogamous man is case in point. And so Albee gives us an edge-man, who is now living outside the accepted values of society and collective opinion. Martin, whose life had been so perfectly ordered, has revealed his dark secret. The great god Pan is at the core of his complex. Martin, like Pan, represents the farthest possibility for the psyche, a frontier (Lopez-Pedraza 1976, p. 188). Is Martin, then, a monster?

One of the etymologies of the word "monster" comes from the French, meaning to warn, to remind. The monster reminds of what is in danger of being forgotten, or puts us in a different mind, or puts us in a mind differently. The Latin root is "monstrum," which means evil omen or portent. The omen a monster presents can have prodigious importance on social and psychological events. I believe the monster's function awakens one to what lies below, slumbering (Doll 1988, pp. 102–103). In Freudian terms, the monster is the awakening to instinct that has for too long been under the command of the super-ego:

> [The super-ego] issues a command and does not ask whether it is possible for people to obey it. On the contrary, it assumes that a man's ego is psychologically capable of anything that is required of it, that his ego has unlimited mastery over his id. This is a mistake; and even in what are known as normal people the id cannot be controlled beyond certain limits. (1961, p. 101)

Martin is in the grips of a Pan experience that is "beyond the control of the willing subject and his ego psychology" (Hillman 2000, p. 19). Hillman explicates this psychic phenomenon from an archetypal perspective: "'Instinct' represents the problematic animal body … and the debates over it represent the struggles with the animal body. Jung's discussion of the instinct [is that it] reflects the richness and essential character of the psyche" (1985, p. 245). Martin's "monstrous" love could translate as any socially unacceptable love situation that is a portent—holds importance—for reconsidered thinking.

If, then, Albee's play is not pornography, what does its pathology teach? Can pathology be a hermeneutic that can lead events into meaning? Judging from my own experience and from the standing ovation given the performance that afternoon, I would have to say that there were no cheap thrills, no titillation, not even a smacking of smut—except possibly from Ross, the foil character who betrays Martin's confidence and refuses to leave his stance of abject normality. Ultimately, the play asks us to examine the capacity to love. There is no doubt whatsoever that

Martin loves Sylvia, a goat. We are asked to believe this. Defying probability, those of us who stood dumbfounded at the end of the play do. But belief does not come without confusion, despite some of the droll lines in the dialogue. Replaying his therapy session to Stevie, the word "natural" goes to the ironic heart of the drama:

> Martin: The man with the pig was a farm boy, and he and his brothers, when they were kids, just … did it … naturally; it was what they did … with the pigs. (*Knits brow*). Or piglets, perhaps; that wasn't clear.
> Stevie: Naturally; of course.
> Martin: Are you agreeing?
> Stevie: No. Just get on with it. (Albee 2003, pp. 34–35)

Martin, in attempting to explain the inexplicable to his wife of twenty-something years, is getting nowhere. He cannot explain his love for Sylvia the goat as well as his love for his wife. The two do not mix, and yet his "falling" is, for him, "natural." The turn of my emotions, too, was a "natural" falling from my belief system. Martin became a believable character, suffering, in shame, in love: his actions from beginning to end of a piece with his character. And I was exactly there. Albee put me there, as most certainly did the actors. Perhaps because this was theater, live and on stage, I felt such an electric current. Certainly, other accounts of love's capacity have been riveting: Morrison's *Beloved* (1988) and her most recent novel *Love* (2003), for instance, stretch thinking about the nature of love in all its complexities, obsessions, and madnesses. And certainly Morrison spares no delicacy with her writing, beginning *Love* with this sentence: "The woman's legs are spread wide open, so I hum" (2003, p. 3). Still, the suspension of disbelief and the concurrent falling into the gap that suspension forged against my will was what I felt that August afternoon in the Apollo Theatre, West End, London.

Albee's drama, if it is pathological, is full of pathos: it confronts issues of love, identity, capacity, interiority, and shame. "In interrupting identification, shame, too, makes identity," writes Eve Sedgwick (2003, p. 36).

> Shame and identity remain in a very dynamic relation to one another, at once deconstituting and foundational, because shame is both peculiarly contagious and peculiarly individuating. One of the strangest features of shame, but perhaps also the one that offers the most conceptual leverage for political projects, is the way … someone else's embarrassment, stigma, debility, bad smell, or strange behaviour, seemingly having nothing to do with me, can so readily flood me … That's the double movement shame makes: toward painful individuation, toward uncontrollable relationality. (2003, pp. 36–37)

She concludes, "transformational shame is performative. I mean theatrical performance" (2003, p. 38).

Bill Pinar calls Madeleine Grumet's study of *currere* and theater "one of the most provocative studies in this [aesthetic] sector of the field" (Pinar et al. 1995, p. 599). He refers to the active engagement of teacher with students, and teacher within herself, openly explored and shared. It is this opening out in a situation of estrangement that affirms life's possibilities. Instead of the strictures of structure,

there is the rupture of structures "laid bare" to the point of seeing what knowledge is hiding (Bataille 1988, p. 52).

To See What Knowledge Is Hiding

Such seeing is, to use Bataille's pun, *ex orbitant* (1988, p. 33). It is to see outside the orb, so as to view the metaphor that hides inside the plot. The root of curriculum is *currere*, the running of the course. Do we dare run the course of ideas inside the classroom? Does the academy have the capacity; that is, room, space, to think more strangely, to run with the ideas? These may be exorbitant questions. Our too-literal times, however, call for *ex orbitant* seeing of a different, more capacious, kind. *Currere* is running so well that we get a runner's high, so fast that we feel the coursing, the flow from who we are (Aoki 1986). *Currere* makes being human possible (Aoki 1990, p. 114). *Currere* is opening to the electric current within that can shock us out of our orbit.

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Chapter 17
Thinking, Feeling, and Willing: How Waldorf Schools Provide a Creative Pedagogy That Nurtures and Develops Imagination

Tom Stehlik

Abstract The approach to education developed by Rudolf Steiner in 1919 is manifest in the worldwide Waldorf school movement and its curriculum, which is based on a firm foundation of child development as a gradual unfolding of the soul qualities of thinking, feeling, and willing. Teachers in Waldorf schools believe that a child's imagination should be nurtured and encouraged to develop in a healthy way, using pedagogical approaches that avoid mass media and information technologies, especially screen-based technologies, particularly in the early years:

> One of the key aims of our method of educating is to help the child toward developing the faculty of free imagination. So, for example, we generally tell stories without offering printed pictures. Our words provide the raw materials. The child has to "clothe" the story with his or her own images. (Mt Barker Waldorf School Parent Association 2001)

This chapter will outline the pedagogical and methodological approaches to teaching and learning that Waldorf schools have been applying around the world for over 80 years, and discuss the extent to which they contribute to the development of the faculty of free imagination in children.

Introduction

The approach to education developed by Rudolf Steiner in 1919 is manifest in the worldwide Waldorf school movement and its curriculum. It is based on an underpinning perception of child development as a gradual unfolding of the soul qualities of thinking, feeling, and willing. Teachers in Waldorf schools work with the view that a child's imagination should be nurtured and encouraged to develop in a healthy way, using pedagogical approaches that avoid mass media and information technologies, especially screen-based technologies, particularly in the early years. This chapter will outline the pedagogical and methodological approaches to teaching and learning that Waldorf Schools have been applying around the world for almost 90 years, and discuss the extent to which they might contribute to the development of the faculty of free imagination in children.

T. Leonard, P. Willis (eds.), *Pedagogies of the Imagination,*

> Rudolf Steiner … a guide for a systematic training of thinking, feeling, willing and developing imagination, inspiration and intuition … grounded in the service of humanity. (Lievegoed 1993, p. 16)

Steiner Education and Waldorf Schools

Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) was an Austrian philosopher and scientist who in his lifetime initiated many practical applications of his theories on human and social development in fields as diverse as agriculture, medicine, art, architecture, human movement, and education. The essence of Steiner's worldview was that a study of the evolution of humanity through various stages of civilization and consciousness will reveal the true direction for the development of society and the individual person in modern times. He coined the term "anthroposophy" to explain this, of which various definitions have been given. According to Shepherd, "perhaps no one definition would contain its whole meaning. The word 'sophia' always denotes the divine wisdom, and 'Anthroposophy' indicates that this wisdom is to be found in the knowledge of the true being of man and of his relation to the universe" (1983, p. 73).

Given Steiner's considered and wide-ranging interests in the renewal of social forms through individual development, he was asked by the German industrialist Emil Molt in 1919 to establish a school for the children of the workers in his Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory, and the first "Waldorf Free School" opened in Stuttgart in September of that year. It was to be "free" in the sense that it would be accessible to all social classes and not limited by bureaucratic constraints, denominational doctrine, or dogmatic ideology. The success of this first school went on to inspire one of the fastest growing independent movements in education, which has since spread to all corners of the globe. At the time of writing there are over 950 Steiner or Waldorf schools worldwide (Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship 2007).

It is remarkable that the original curriculum and teaching methodologies that Steiner developed over a period of three months in 1919 still form the basis of the pedagogical approach taken in Waldorf schools around the world today, despite—and possibly because of—the rapid rise of teaching technologies and educational theories based on cognitive and educational psychology that became popular in the latter half of the last century (Von Heydebrand 1966). Even more notable is the fact that this pedagogical approach is firmly rooted in anthroposophy, providing an underpinning educational philosophy that teachers find support from and parents respond to. Such a philosophical basis is increasingly absent from secular state schooling systems, which strive to be politically correct and value-neutral yet as a consequence suffer from a lack of cohesive direction. In this respect, Steiner education can be firmly placed within the humanistic/holistic tradition, and resonates strongly with the curriculum work that Macdonald (1981) has termed "mythopoetic."

What Is Steiner Education?

This is a question that is frequently directed at Waldorf educators around the globe, and several schools address "Frequently asked questions about Waldorf education" on their websites. The Cape Ann Waldorf School for example replies in part: "Waldorf Schools seek to educate the whole child, integrating rigorous academics with emotional and spiritual growth and physical skills" (1999, p. 1). This whole-child orientation is often referred to in the literature as "head, heart, and hands," meaning that children learn with their body and their feelings as well as their intellect (Barnes 1991, p. 54; Easton 1997, p. 87; Koetzsch 1997, p. 221).

While it is difficult to provide a full answer to the question in a few paragraphs, a concise and useful summary is provided by Easton (1997), who suggests that Waldorf educational theory and practice can be distinguished by the following six key elements:

1. A theory of child development
2. A theory of teacher self-development
3. A core curriculum that integrates artistic and academic work
4. A method of teaching as an art that pays careful attention to synchronizing teaching methods with the rhythm of a child's unfolding capacities
5. Integration of teaching and administration
6. Building the school and the greater Waldorf community as networks of support for students, teachers, and parents

Child Development

An important aspect of Steiner education that is fundamental to a Waldorf teacher's understanding of child development is the image of the child as a threefold human being: body, soul, and spirit. The physical body reflects an earthly stream in terms of the laws of biology and heredity, that is, what the child inherits from its parents; a genetic history. The spirit is subject to the laws of reincarnation and karma and represents a cosmic stream. This presumes that the individual not only has a spiritual history which it brings with it to its earthly incarnation, but will have a future spiritual potential. The soul, then, is the expression of the meeting of these two streams in the present, the higher self and the physical self, which create an individual identity, or psyche. While the concept of destiny is acknowledged in this view, past lives plus spiritual potential create a certain choice or freedom in the present. Teachers are concerned with the soul of a child in this sense of the word, but must recognize and work with the fact that each child has a spiritual history and that very young children are still incarnating until about their third year. It is interesting to note that the original meaning of the word *psyche* referred to what the Ancient Greeks considered to be "the soul"; therefore the term "psychology" really means "knowledge of the soul." This discussion of child development is based on Steiner's principles of "spiritual psychology" (Steiner 1981, 1984).

The view of the child as a being that incorporates a cosmic history is nothing new in comparison to other established views such as those held by certain eastern religions—Buddhism for example—but when applied to an educational philosophy it creates a picture of the child as an "unfolding personality" that "requires nourishing by caring adults" (Miller 1997, p. 5), according to certain predestined rhythms and patterns. While this is important for teachers it can also be a revelation for parents, for example for the nursing mother to realize that her infant's soul has a "dreamlike consciousness" that is still in the realm of the angels and therefore should be regarded with reverence. However, the most important aspect of child development, both from a parenting and teaching point of view, is the recognition of the rhythmic progression of the unfolding soul in accord with the "rhythmic processes of the universe" (Childs 1991, p. 39), and the importance of understanding the appropriate ways of responding to a child's needs at particular stages in this process.

All children go through the same bodily phases of growth, but at the same time experience soul development and changes in their consciousness. Consistent with a biological science view that the body cells are "replaced" every seven years, Steiner considered that this soul development process also occurred in seven-year cycles, from 0–7, 7–14, 14–21 and so on. The first seven years are characterized by rapid growth of the physical body, and learning by imitation and play, in which the child largely relates to the world through its *will*. Around the age of six or seven, the change from milk teeth to adult teeth signifies a change in consciousness that goes beyond dependence on immediate experience to an ability to create mental pictures and to interpret concepts through *feeling*. This is why Waldorf teachers believe that a child is not ready for formal schooling until the age of seven and that reading and writing should be introduced slowly, a well-known and contentious aspect of Waldorf schools. This phase continues until the next great physical change, the onset of puberty around the age of 13 to 14 when a capacity for abstract *thinking* and an ability to make meaningful judgments unfolds, leading up to the full development of the individual ego by the age of 21. These first three phases are therefore characterized by the progressive development of the three "soul forces": willing, feeling, and thinking (Easton 1997; Childs 1991; Mazzone 1997; Ruenzel 1995).

While these seven-yearly milestones continue throughout life, a fundamental aspect of this theory of the unfolding being is the significance of the effects of education and upbringing on an individual's later development in body, soul, and spirit, which is encapsulated in William Wordsworth's famous aphorism "The child is father of the man" (from "My heart leaps up", 1802). The meaning of this saying can be interpreted as: everything that a child experiences affects the way in which the adult relates to the world later in life; and more literally: children bear the seeds of that which they will become within themselves. The task for parents and educators is to nourish this seed and allow it to grow naturally, in order to lay the foundation for effective learning throughout life. This is another fundamental aim of Waldorf schools. "The strength to do this [learn through life] lies within the core of the individual, the 'father to the man' who can never be an object of education but

who must rather be enabled to take on the process of self-education from within" (Maier 1994, p. 13). In this regard Steiner was also an early champion of the concept of lifelong learning.

Teacher Self-Development

This process of self-education also applies to teachers. It would seem apparent that anyone seeking to become a Waldorf teacher would need to develop a clear understanding of this view of child development, only a small part of which has been outlined above. They would also need to become familiar with ways of understanding and working with children and their behavior, such as Steiner's interpretation of the Greek doctrine of the four temperaments: choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, and melancholic. Recognizing dominant temperaments in children can be useful in relating to them and managing their relations with each other, but the teacher must also recognize that their own temperament can dominate the dynamic of a class and should be prepared to work with it in a positive way. A significant aspect of the pedagogical approach in a Waldorf school is the fact that during the primary years the teacher stays with the same group of children from Class 1 to Class 7, corresponding to the second seven-year cycle from age 7 to 14. They therefore begin with young children who are just experiencing the change of teeth and end with young adolescents who are experiencing puberty. "This demanding and challenging commitment by the main lesson teacher requires that the teacher follow a path of self-development that makes it possible to keep pace with the changing needs of students" (Easton 1997, p. 89).

Core Curriculum

In the primary years especially, the Waldorf curriculum is based on rhythm and repetition, so that students become attuned to the rhythm of the day, the week, the seasons, and so on, and learn similar content in different ways in subsequent stages, building on a foundation and deepening their learning as new capacities unfold. Throughout the primary and high school years the main focus of intellectual activity occurs in the morning, with a long main lesson devoted to a specific topic for several weeks. Afternoons involve more artistic, creative, or physical activities.

Whether the main lesson topic is history, science, social studies, or writing, artistic work is incorporated into the learning activities, engaging the head, heart, and hands. For example, a main lesson in botany would involve not only identifying plants in the field, but the students would produce paintings of the plants and write poems about them. This is a classic example of the recognition of the integration of science, art, and nature, and goes right back to the influence of Goethe on Steiner's

philosophy of education. At the same time, "activities which are often considered frills at mainstream schools are central at Waldorf schools: art, music handwork and foreign languages" (Cape Ann Waldorf School 1999, p. 1). All children learn to play music and to knit, as well as experiencing woodwork, eurythmy, and painting right through to Class 12.

Myth as a Source of Knowledge

A mythopoetic approach to the universal nature of knowledge is clearly represented in the more fundamental aspect of the Steiner curriculum with its recapitulation of the development of human consciousness over the centuries. "Curriculum content is shaped, or at least colored, by what is understood as the consciousness, soul-mood or life principles at work within a given epoch (ontogenesis recapitulates phylogenesis)" (Skewes 1996, p. 7). This is reflected in the primary school curriculum in the study of great epochs of human civilization at the corresponding age at which the child's individual consciousness is unfolding. For example, Norse mythology is introduced in Class 4 when the children at around age nine are able to identify the moral and ethical issues arising from the great sagas of the Norse gods as they battle with the forces of light and darkness (Leah 1997). In Class 5 the study of Ancient Greece introduces the allegorical and metaphorical nature of the characters of the Greek gods, and by inference the children are made aware of the influence of these archetypes on the collective psyche of modern society and culture. To continue with this epochal chronology, Roman times are dealt with in Class 6, which gives a picture of the origin of the modern-day state and a highly regulated and martial society, at an age when the children are beginning to question authority structures.

The notion of recapitulation is carried through into the high school years when the students would progressively learn about the Middle Ages, Shakespearean times, the Renaissance, and Victorian England as well as return to more detailed aspects of ancient cultures through the core subjects of art, English, history, and comparative religion. There are obviously regional variations to this curriculum, as well as a debate in Australia as to whether it should be less Euro-centric and more adapted to a regional and local cultural context (Skewes 1996; Van Kerkhoven 1996), but the guiding impulse of basing the curriculum on the evolution of human consciousness through an appreciation of the growing child in his or her natural environment is universal in Steiner/Waldorf schools.

The use of story-telling is particularly important, and fairy tales, myths, and legends can convey archetypal images and moral messages in a way that speaks to the child's consciousness more deeply than by simply telling: "stories are an age-old means of enlivening the learning process and stimulating students' imaginations" (Easton 1997, p. 90).

Teaching as an Art

> Human life calls for more than education in the realm of meaning, it calls for education in what the will experiences in its sleeping condition: rhythm, beat, melody, the harmony of colours, repetition, any kind of activity not calling for a grasp of meaning. (Steiner 1976, p. 89)

The prevalence and influence of cognitive and behavioral theories of psychology in teacher education courses have had the effect of turning education into a science, a process that can be reduced to objectives, defined by subject matter, and measured by testing. Waldorf schools consider that enabling children to learn in a meaningful and holistic way is an art, and requires creative and aesthetic input, a subjective expressive approach, and attention to intuitive and imaginal processes. The beauty of nature is reflected in the pleasing environment of the classroom, with its warm colors, the nature table with objects typical of the season, and colorful art works. The cycle of the seasons, the great rhythms of nature, are brought into the classroom and into the curriculum in a living way.

Waldorf teachers make a point of engaging young children by telling stories using the oral tradition, without necessarily reading from printed texts, especially picture books:

> One of the key aims of our method of educating is to help the child toward developing the faculty of free imagination. So, for example, we generally tell stories without offering printed pictures. Our words provide the raw materials. The child has to "clothe" the story with his or her own images. (Mt Barker Waldorf School Parent Association 2001)

The methods of teaching therefore involve story-telling, poems, songs, and movement, with an intentional use of rhythm in language to engage children in learning: the power of language and the human voice are not only recognized but embraced. A modernist perspective of a Waldorf classroom would dismiss it as being too teacher-centered, with the focus always on the voice and words of the teacher taking the place of what might otherwise be a text, a video, a worksheet, or some other curriculum resource. However, this approach requires the teacher to continually develop their own aesthetic and mythopoetic sensibilities; student-centered, problem-based, and self-directed pedagogies can also be exploited as an end rather than a means to learning.

The overall picture of the Waldorf teaching method can be seen as one of rhythm, respect, and reverence; an appreciation of natural beauty, and an integration of art, music, and movement in all academic work. It therefore becomes important for the child to experience these qualities in the home environment as well, in order to maintain a balance between the values at home and those at school. This can be a challenge for parents as it requires them to consider what the young child should be exposed to: for example natural toys as opposed to plastic ones; dolls without pre-determined facial features; minimizing exposure to loud music or mass media; and ideally not exposing young children to television or moving images at all for at least their first seven years.

Integration of Teaching and Administration

The traditional structure of a Waldorf school, true to the original intent of the very first school, requires leadership and school management to be shared by the entire faculty, which selects members to a steering committee. This committee—referred to as the College of Teachers—acts as the legally constituted management body of the school and carries all of the decision-making responsibilities that would normally fall to one person, a principal. There are many variations on this structure, with some schools having a separate administrator, or a school council whose members include parents; however the absence of the position of principal is almost universal. It can be seen as an important symbol of a school that values consensus decision making and an egalitarian approach to management above hierarchical structures—one of the enduring principles of Steiner's Threefold Social Order (Steiner 1972a, b).

The School as a Learning Community

Easton's statement that "the development of the school as a learning community is one of the major achievements of Waldorf education" (1997, p. 91) sets Waldorf schools apart from most other schools. The shared mission, philosophy, educational theories, practices, and rituals are seen as key factors in building community. As stated above, many parents are drawn to this aspect of the schools which they perceive to be missing from most modern state school systems, and feel that being able to participate physically, intellectually, and spiritually in the Waldorf school community can also be a strong transformative learning experience. As one parent stated, "In that process of seeing what your child goes through, you suddenly start waking up to yourself and understanding your own path as an individual more clearly" (Stehlik 2002, p. 129).

Imagination as the Basis of Education

Many people who know little about Steiner or Waldorf schools may at least have an idea that an expectation is made of parents that they will keep their children's television viewing to a minimum, or even remove the possibility altogether. A logical question that may follow this idea is, since Steiner died in 1925 long before television was invented, how could he have issued such a decree as part of his pedagogical approach?

Critics of Steiner education (and there are quite a few, especially in the US: see Dugan and Daar 1994, for example) and skeptics in general see the banning of television as another example of a cultist and even fascist approach to child rearing and a threat to freedom of choice. In fact, the schools would be the first to recognize this:

> At first, in the context of common culture and "normal" life, this position may seem to be unduly harsh, dogmatic or plain silly. It may also appear to be undemocratic; undemocratic because some parents may feel this is illegitimate pressure by the school into the private realm of the home. (Mt Barker Waldorf School Parent Association 2001, p. 32)

However the importance of a harmonious relationship between the ideals and values espoused in the home and those espoused in the school environment was fundamental to Steiner's view of how education should work almost 90 years ago and this, combined with his theories on the way in which the developing child incarnates into the world using creative play and learning by imitation, can directly apply to the effects of present day innovations like television, which "fails to enrich the soul and nourish the imagination" (Brooky 1998, p. 4), as well as other information technologies that accelerate intellectual development to the detriment of the feeling life.

As described above, Steiner education is premised on the view that the young child is still in a dreamlike state for the first few years of life, a precious time during which development should not be forced by the type of abstract intellectual notions that characterize the adult view of the world:

> What the child receives in a Waldorf classroom in the early grades is delicate, as matters of the imagination always are; exposure to the powerful and usually ugly images of the mass media can easily overpower what is living in a germinal state in the child's soul. Given time, these seeds will ripen and the child will be able to face the modern world well-armed and armored. I would hope that every Waldorf student will be an adult who can use a computer or a TV (or their future equivalents) and value them for what they are and *not* be enslaved to them, or idolize them as an expression of superhuman intelligence. (Schwartz 1999, p. 3)

Therefore, in order for Waldorf teachers to inspire the imaginations of their students, parents need to be supportive of what happens in the classroom by providing a similar environment in the home. Once parents realize the value of this approach and commit to it, taking an informed and critical approach to television and other mass media becomes just one part of a set of values shared by the wider school community and the notion that it might be perceived as "undemocratic" is no longer an issue.

The Mt Barker Waldorf School for Rudolf Steiner Education, located in South Australia and founded in 1979, sees parent education as an important associated task in supporting the school's pedagogical approach. As with most Waldorf schools, teachers find themselves addressing frequently asked questions from parents about the educational philosophies that underpin policies such as restricting television viewing, as the following extract from the school's parent handbook suggests:

> Television agitates against the development of free imagination. TV images reach the child in a fixed immutable manner. Content [for the young child] becomes dictatorial. Imaginations lack fluidity. (Mt Barker Waldorf School Parent Association 2001, p. 33)

Steiner was concerned that the modern world, even in 1919, was "speeding up" the development of children and "hardening" them to the demands of a fast-paced world when they should be allowed to enjoy what he called "the kingdom of

childhood." In a Waldorf kindergarten, therefore, the children's play is regarded as their work, and they learn through creative experimentation and cooperation with each other in a safe and supportive environment. In these early years it is considered that the child's consciousness is not wide awake like that of an adult but still in a dreamy state, and therefore "pictures presented to its imagination in story form should be in the nature of dream-pictures from the world of make-believe" (Childs 1991, p. 85). As described, the teaching methods reflect this by relying more on the oral than the written tradition, and using art, music, movement, and rhythm to support the absorption of content rather than abstract intellectual methods.

In the primary and high schools each subject is presented in an artistic and imaginative way whether it is science, math, or English. Art and aesthetic appreciation are integrated into the curriculum and ideally even the children's exercise books, in which "every page is to be an artistic event" (Skewes 2002, p. 1). For example, the teaching of the high school science curriculum includes a series of field camps where students experience the natural world in situ, and are given the opportunity to gain a more experiential and holistic appreciation of the environment in relation to their own place in the bigger picture of evolution.

The Mythopoetic Process in Practice

Despite its apparent successful transition to most countries and cultures over 90 years, Steiner education has been criticized for the fact that the curriculum has been adopted and applied fairly unchanged in most instances and in most situations. From this perspective it could be argued that Steiner's pedagogy is deterministic and does not allow for individual or regional difference, or is in fact so prescriptive and controlling that each child's own mythologies are ignored and subsumed into an all-consuming "one size fits all" approach. As discussed elsewhere in this volume (see Chapter 2), the use of mythopoetic language in education invokes an evocative power rather than a controlling power. While there is no doubt that the Steiner curriculum is highly structured and prescribed, it is structured around the development of the whole child and adopts processes that focus on their aesthetic and spiritual development in addition to intellectual and physical development. These processes by design require much more subtle and delicate pedagogical approaches that evoke as well as instruct, and provide a foundation for the individual child to be able to develop a reflective-imaginal way of viewing the world as well as a logical-rational one.

It could be argued that a laissez faire approach to education, such as the still controversial Summerhill model championed by A. S. Neill, might equally allow children to explore and experience the aesthetic and the numinous through freedom of expression and choice (Neill 1968). Encouraging the natural development of children's emotional, intellectual, and social development according to this pedagogical approach also acknowledges that "the kingdom of childhood" should be nurtured and revered. Yet at the time of writing, the original Summerhill school has an enrolment

of less than 90 pupils, while other schools modeled on Neill's "free" approach to education continue to struggle with small or shrinking enrolments or have even failed. Steiner education continues to grow with 630 schools in 22 European countries alone adopting an approach that is "free" in the original sense that Steiner envisaged for the very first "Free Waldorf School": accessible to all social classes and free of bureaucratic constraints, denominational doctrine, or dogmatic ideology.

However, it is not so much the quantity but the quality of the graduates of this pedagogical approach that lends weight to the argument presented in this chapter that a deterministic pedagogy can actually produce very pluralistic results, if the teaching methodologies encourage young people to reflect imaginally on their own life stance using the great archetypal myths of our times. In this regard the Steiner curriculum, while basing its whole foundation on the history of civilization, appears to produce outcomes that are future-focused and highly relevant for our times, as suggested in the following section.

Education for Life

Recent independent research from a futures perspective into the effects of Steiner education has highlighted just one salient outcome of this unique approach to schooling which may also go some way towards addressing the concerns discussed in the previous section. According to Gidley,

> Key educational "futurists" have engaged in critical speculation about alternative forms of education that might better prepare youth for a rapidly changing and uncertain future, while also considering the needs of future generations. Several researchers recommend more holistic, integrated teaching methods using imagination, visualization, pro-social skills and specific futures methodologies. Intriguingly, many of these are crucial aspects of Steiner education. (2002, p. 156)

To determine whether Waldorf schools were any different in preparing young people for a rapidly changing world and an uncertain future, Gidley surveyed 128 senior school students in Waldorf high schools in three Australian states, and conducted two focus group workshops with the Year 12 class of one school, to investigate and discuss their views and attitudes towards the future. She found that this group of students "were just as inclined as other students and young people to have grave expectations about the future of the environment, social justice and conflict" (Gidley 1998, p. 7).

However, in spite of this Gidley found the students in general

> were not disempowered by those negative future expectations, but rather, they demonstrated a strong activist will to create more positive futures … [and] the students' qualitative responses and visions demonstrated that they see the quality and character of humanness itself as a major factor in the challenges they face and the futures they hope for. (2002, p. 159)

Gidley believes it is the integrated approach to the development of the whole child that contributes to this confidence and to a more holistic worldview than might be gained through a curriculum focused mainly on academic content and outcomes.

> In particular, the cultivation of the students' imagination helps them envision prospective futures different from the present. In Steiner schools, the foremost tool for cultivating the imagination is stories, a pre-eminent medium of teaching. Also, Steiner schools widely use the creative arts to give meaning to every subject and promote intrinsic motivation and positive self-esteem. (Gidley 2002, p. 158)

The link between the arts and cognitive development is a key characteristic of Steiner education, as mentioned above, and Steiner himself saw this link as central to developing individual initiative and as a crucial role of teaching:

> If, through an artistic approach, which appeals to the whole human being, we gradually unfold in our teaching what has become purely intellectual in the world, our pupils will grow into complete and integrated personalities, capable of developing real initiative. (Steiner 1981, p. 86)

In conclusion, the continuing growth and success of Waldorf schools in producing young people with the strength of will, breadth of thinking, and depth of feeling to be truly global citizens suggests that these schools clearly foster a pedagogy of the imagination.

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Chapter 18
Getting a Feel for the Work: Mythopoetic Pedagogy for Adult Educators Through Phenomenological Evocation

Peter Willis

Abstract Education for vocational development has to combine a focus on career opportunities on the one hand with realistic attention to the learners' capacities and inclinations on the other. Such a curriculum needs to have something for the head and the heart. It is contended in this chapter that evocative representative pedagogy has such a holistic agenda. Evocative representation in vocational and career development draws on two complementary sources. The first is *mythopoetic reflection*, in which learners imagine being in various work situations of a particular career and dwell on their "gut" reactions to them, looking to see to what extent such experiences feel appropriate to their sense of self—their private myths or generative self-stories—with its aspirations and capabilities. The second is *expressive phenomenology in pedagogy*, through which attempts are made to present to potential participants in some life pursuit in an animated and lifelike way the lived experience of predictable events and practices in such a pursuit as a contribution to the person's mythopoetic reflection. A case study of predictable events presented for contemplation in adult education practice is provided to ground the processes.

Introduction

> Nobody told me it would be like this…
> So that's what it is like…
> You don't know what it's like…
> How does it feel?

This chapter explores the use of evocative representation in the vocational education of trainers and educators of adults. The term vocational is used here in the classic sense of pertaining to one's calling or profession. It is argued that education for vocational development needs to combine a focus on career opportunities on the one hand with realistic attention to the learners' capacities and inclinations. Such a curriculum should have something for both the head and the heart, and it is contended that the evocative representative pedagogy of the curriculum explored here has such a holistic agenda. The chapter title refers to a complex but recognizable

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form of knowing that is referred to as getting a "feel" for something. It carries the sense of concreteness and insight usually linked to real or quasi-real experience. To have a "feel for the work" is to be persuaded that, through certain experiences, a person has gained a direct sense of what something is actually like and can expect a so-called "gut-level" reaction to it rather than a purely cerebral response. To get a feel for the work is to become convinced intuitively that it is something that a person can and wants to be part of or not.

Evocative presentation refers to a pedagogic process made up of two complementary processes. The first, evocative portrayal, refers to a presentation of events in a particular line of work—in this case adult education—as experiences that can be shared through dramatized representations and related reflections. The second, called mythopoetic reflection, is a process through which would-be participants in a particular line of work or profession are prompted to imagine themselves in that form of work while reflectively checking how this sits with the ideas and images—their own myths—they have of themselves and the work or profession they feel called to.

There are four parts to this chapter. The first explores mythopoesis and its significance in vocational or career choice, professional induction and development. The second part looks at the nature of expressive phenomenology and its contribution to the mythopoetic curriculum pursued in evocative pedagogy. The third part explores in some detail a drama-based curriculum pursued to evoke mythopoetic reflection. It begins with an outline of the "evocative pedagogy" curriculum and its component phases followed by a description of a specific application of this pedagogy in the education of adult educators. The fourth part is a short conclusion and debriefing.

The Mythopoetic Curriculum Foundation

This first part describes mythopoesis and its place in pedagogy, which has been briefly described in the introduction to this volume. Mythopoetic pedagogy, here explored in the context of the education of adult educators, refers to processes through which people seeking to become such educators and trainers of adults are encouraged to confront working images of events and encounters in the role they are about to take on and allow these experienced events to become present imagistically to their consciousness. The person contemplating these is thus encouraged to discern or "feel" their "fit" with their own personal and professional myths. Bradbeer, writing about teachers in schools (but it seems equally relevant to adult educators), said that the mythopoetic method focuses

> on the teacher as a consciousness rather than an informed intellect—the teacher as a person consciously and deeply within the myths and narratives of his or her own world both as a person and a worker … the individual attends to, or listens to, the intangible fabric of his or her own experience of life. (1998, p. 47)

What is suggested here is that, in the mythopoetic mode, trainee adult educators confront, review, and re-shape their own self-stories and related practices in the

light of the kinds of activities and experiences they can expect to encounter as educators and trainers of adults. These reflective imagistic processes are not concerned with generating abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories, nor with identifying causes. When trainee adult educators dwell on images of adult education practices as if they themselves were experiencing them, they are making space for a response of imaginal acceptance or rejection.

The "imaginal" was taken by Hillman (1981) from Henry Corbin (1969), a student of Sufi mysticism, to refer to the human power of image making and its links to the so-called "knowing of the heart," the knowing linked to a person's sense of her or himself and her or his position in the world. The "imaginal" (cf. Bradbeer 1998, p. 14) differs from the "imaginary" which contains the notion of fantasy. For Hillman (1981) the imaginal has nothing to do with fantasy but much to do with knowing and reflecting linked to the heart, the seat of desires, dreams, and wishes.

"Imagistic processes" refers to ways in which people become aware of images in their psyche that carry great meaning for them and, associated with them, special stories or personal myths that carry their deepest values and beliefs. These "imaginal" processes (Hillman 1981) are centered on, and draw from, the human powers of image making (cf. Boyd and Myers 1988; Dirkx 2000; Nelson 1995, 2000).

Mythopoetic Pedagogy: Allowing the Images to Imprint

One strategy of mythopoetic pedagogy has been to offer learners dramatized images of a role event (in this context, a significant moment of adult education practice portrayed in film) in order for these images to imprint into their consciousness. It seeks to create, for the learners' contemplation—for learners to dwell on—an existential and imaginal portrayal of what the experience of various adult educational events are actually like. The aim is for deep feelings and metaphors to be evoked into the learners' personal consciousness so that they, the learners, can begin to take on, however vaguely, the "being" of the role, its ontology, and a glimpse of what they themselves are likely to become if they persist and take on this role. This can be a strong learning challenge when people about to take on an adult educator position in society confront a vivid vision of what they might become, and how they might be challenged and changed, and not necessarily without difficulties.

The mythopoetic curriculum seeks to create a resonance between the images that accompany the ideas learners have about their own approach to the adult educator roles being contemplated and their own mythic images, which may welcome or challenge them. Attempts are made to evoke strong aesthetic responses through contemplative and receptive approaches to these representational texts and images that have some reference to events in an adult educator's professional and personal life. What is suggested here is that a coincidence of *vicarious* experience and *desired* experience can be a powerful force for mythopoetic consolidation where a person's self-myths and work myths are modified or focused to embrace the work and career being presented.

This pedagogic process may also generate disenchantment among some who, perhaps for the first time, are not attracted to what they realize various forms of adult education will actually be like for them and what demands it could make on them. This can precipitate their early and honest departure from the profession with a chance to choose a career more appropriate to their real and possibly suddenly revealed aspirations.

The "imaginal vicarious experience" curriculum mentioned above, through which aspirants to different forms of work and profession—in this case adult education—are encouraged to embark on a personal reflective process, is pursued through the evocative power of holistic, so-called "presentational" images (Heron 1992, p. 165), rather than the "propositional" or "categorical" power of analytical classification. In Heron's view, as well as Hillman's, the power of analysis and classification, with its links to "logos" mentioned in the introduction to this volume, underpins human logical, rational judgment and provides a road of release from ignorance and prejudice. It is essentially cool and detached. In contrast, a complementary imaginal energy, with its links to "mythos," also mentioned in the introduction, is evoked by the mythopoetic imagination. With its direct links to perceptions of the good and the desirable, it is essentially warm, passionate, and engaged. It underpins the visioning, grounding, and inspiring work of imaginal versions of a person's so-called "vocational" learning and provides a road of release from inertia to enthusiasm and from the minimalism of the uncommitted workers pursuing "just a job" to the enthusiasm of people who are convinced and committed to their work and profession.

This chapter suggests that a helpful foundation of the aesthetic evocations of mythopoetic reflection is generated by an *expressive* form of phenomenological research. An *expressive* approach to phenomenological research is contrasted with *explanatory* research, which seeks to classify or to attribute causes to a phenomenon. The expressive form, with its links to the "mythos," imaginal part of the psyche, seeks to construct a deep and evocative accurate portrayal that attempts to present the lived experience of some significant event so that its very "livedness" is brought to life and is available to the aspirants' attentive gaze. The phenomenological foundations of these claims and the expressive version employed here require further exploration.

Expressive Phenomenology[1]

Expressive phenomenology refers to an approach to inquiry into human life and action in which the aim is to create as far as possible a vivid portrayal of what something is like "as it is experienced" (van Manen 1990, p. 9). The expressive approach, drawing on a specific approach to phenomenological research, seeks to

[1] The following draws on and summarizes earlier work I have pursued in this area (cf. Willis 2002).

portray the findings of its inquiry using vivid poetic and aesthetic representational forms. It is distinct from so-called explanatory approaches, which seek to explain things by classifying them or by pointing to their causes (Willis 2002, p. 131).

Phenomenology wants to slow the researcher down so that she or he can purposefully "dwell" on the phenomenon itself—the lived experience of some event or activity. It does not seek to locate a phenomenon in an abstract matrix by saying how its abstracted structure might be similar to others, but rather to illumine its specific quality as a lived experience. Phenomenology does not hold that the world "out there" can be known in the way a photographic plate takes in an image of the world. All knowing is at one level subjective since it is always related to, and constructed by, the person engaged in knowing. As Spiegelberg, one of the earlier authorities on the phenomenological movement, wrote: "All phenomenology takes its start from the phenomena. A phenomenon is essentially what appears to someone, that is to a subject" (1959, p. 75).

Some of this subjectivity focuses on the things being experienced, while some focuses on the person experiencing the thing. Spiegelberg lists a range of meanings of subjectivity in order to explore the nature of more-than-purely-subjective subjective knowledge which is generated in phenomenological approaches. He writes that "all phenomenology as a study of the phenomena, is subjective in the sense that its objects are subject-related but not in the sense that it makes them completely subject-dependent" (1959, p. 78).

Background

In its historical origins, phenomenology rose out of a reaction to positivism through which the discourses of the physical sciences were applied to all forms of human inquiry. Husserl (1964) and his followers created a counter move, attending to the part humans play in the actual construction of the world as it is experienced. There is a tension between objectifying views that posit that the world exists "out there" independently of human consciousness; and mentalist views, which think the world is purely a construction of the mind. Phenomenology seeks to steer a middle path.

The beginnings of phenomenological research are attributed to Edmund Husserl, whose work appeared in German in the latter part of the nineteenth century. English translations came later (e.g. 1964). They were further developed by Heidegger (1962, 1982) and Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1974) and received elaboration by their great apologist Spiegelberg (1975), mentioned above, and Ricoeur (1978). It has become a major source of illumination for psychology (cf. Colaizzi 1973; Valle and Halling 1989; Todres 2007) and nursing research (cf. Titchen and Hobson 2005; Crotty 1996b; Benner 1994). It has also been applied to school education by van Manen (1990) and to adult education by Stanage (1987), Collins (1987) and to a lesser extent Brookfield (1990). Recent studies from Sokolowski (2000) and the comprehensive overview from Moran (2000) have kept this tradition alive in the contemporary period.

Titchen and Hobson (2005) suggest a significant distinction between direct and indirect phenomenological approaches. As they write,

> there are two very different approaches in phenomenological research to look at the same phenomenon. The first approach is direct—looking at the phenomenon as it presents itself to the consciousness of the person who lives it. The researcher is on the outside, looking in. The second approach is to get inside the social context of the phenomenon, to live it oneself, as it were, and look at the phenomenon more indirectly. (2005, p. 121)

It is a version of the first approach that is followed here.

The great quest of phenomenological researchers is to "go back to the things themselves." But what are these "things"? What kind of objectivity is meant here? One of the basic points of the phenomenological approach is that when we refer to "things out there," we are in fact providing a name to "things" constructed and named in the mind, without which they could not be thought. One of the early commentators, Davis, put it like this, summarizing the thought of Swingewood (1984):

> the meaning of things is not inherent in objects, but is actually located in the individual's inner life … The researcher's task is to understand reality as it is, actively and consciously created by subjects, not as a pure entity that exists "out there." (Davis 1991, p. 5)

Having said this, it seems that "things" are not simply things but rather become "things" in the act of perception and naming. This basic naming is always being further shaped and distorted by all kinds of cultural influences on the knowing subject. The phenomenological agenda is an attempt to get back to the "first naming": "to understand and describe phenomena exactly as they appear in an individual's consciousness" (Phillipson 1972, p. 123). The leading idea is that humans need to be aware of the power of the human mind to generate ideas of reality according to culturally pre-set prejudices and ways of thinking. As Crotty writes,

> Far from being an uncritical exploration of cultural understandings, phenomenology emerges as a radically critical methodology that requires we call into question what is taken for granted. In that critique, in that calling into question, nothing is sacred. (1995, p. 92)

The phenomenological stance does not immediately attend to, or name, the source of an idea's generation, but rather attempts to bypass questions of this nature and focus back on the experience. This process is referred to as "epoché" or "bracketing." It wants to bring the inquirer's eye and mind back to the thing itself and ask: "What is it like?" The "phenomenological eye" seeks to "bracket out" later interpretative constructions and re-constructions. As Crotty puts it, "the focus should lie with what manifests itself in experience rather than what the subject has made of it" (1996b, p. 38).

The "Truth" of Phenomenological Knowing

The distinction between the active and contemplative modalities in the way people turn their attention to things in the world has resonances with so-called explanatory and expressive approaches to research. In the contemplative modality, the mind does not "seize upon" the object to analyse and subdue it (as in the proactive modality),

but attempts to behold it; to allow its reality, its beauty, and its texture to become more and more present. Even here, consciousness is still active, but the modality of thinking is different. It is an act of reception that holds the thinking mind back from closure and returns again and again to behold the object, allowing words and images to emerge from the contemplative engagement. Again these are not lightly made but made with great care and commitment to the integrity of the approach. The integrity of the phenomenological approach cannot be assessed by a direct almost numerical correlation, but by criteria appropriate to its "portrayal" character.

Having outlined elements of the expressive approach, it is necessary briefly to explore the criteria of its knowledge claims and how they can be applied. If, as is suggested here, expressive forms of research can claim academic credibility, there is still the question of what criteria can be applied to protect and promote the validity of certain arts-based approaches to social science. In general terms, the question asked of texts in expressive research is to what extent do they create a living and real portrayal.

When a person recites a poem as a way of conveying what an experience was like, it would be odd for someone to challenge the author to prove it. But it would not be odd for someone to demand that, at least in some way, it fulfill appropriate criteria applied to aesthetic and representative work.

Criteria of Quality of Expressive Inquiry

Garman and Piantanida (1996, p. 17) provide a summary of eight criteria for qualitative research of the expressive type. Elaborated below, these evoke many of the arts-based characteristics from the work of Eisner and Barone mentioned earlier. It is important to see these as linked to the exploration of expressive rather than explanatory knowledge, with its associated subjective–objective tension. The criteria are: verite, integrity, rigor, utility, vitality, aesthetics, ethics, and verisimilitude.

Verisimilitude, last on the list but perhaps key to a quality test of this kind of inquiry, refers to what has been called the "phenomenological aha"—the moment of "that's it"; "yes that is what it is really like." Verisimilitude is a significant criterion for inquiries in qualitative research using, or at least influenced by, phenomenological approaches. In their exploration of "arts-based" research, Barone and Eisner (1997) point out that one of the features of research of this expressive kind is that its texts are presented to the reader as "virtual realities," seeking to provide a recognizable representation of the real world. The quality of such texts is to be found in the strength of their "virtuality":

> In a text with verisimilitude, the reader recognises some of the portrayed qualities from his or her own experiences and is thereby able to believe in the possibility—the credibility—of the virtual world [presented in the expressive text] as an analogue to the "real" one. (1997, p. 4)

By *verite*, the authors mention the work's consistency with accepted knowledge; as they say, a phrase or sentence "rings true." *Integrity* is the measure of the study's structure and cohesion, and is the strength of the rationale advanced for the use of

this method in the particular study under question. *Rigor* questions the sufficiency of a study's intellectual work and the soundness of its portrayals. *Utility* tests the usefulness and professional relevance of the work and its contribution to the field.

The criterion of *vitality* is a significant expressive category. The authors invoking this criterion ask:

> Is it important, meaningful … non-trivial? Does it have a sense of vibrancy, intensity, excitement of discovery? Are the proper personae (or voices) used for the author(s) and other participants? Do metaphors, images, visuals communicate powerfully? (1997, p. 18)

Writers use *aesthetics* to measure the ability of a research work to enrich and illumine its readers: "Does it give me insight into some universal part of my educational self? Does it touch my spirit in some way?" (1997, p. 18).

Under the criterion of *ethics*, the research work is interrogated as to its protection of confidentiality and respect for participants, and whether the research work has what they call an "ethical sensibility"—a general tone of respect for the rights and feelings of those mentioned in the research.

The question may still be asked: how does or will one know if such expressive presentations are good or useful? All that one can do in the expressive medium is to ensure that the foundations of accurate and vivid presentation have been followed, and that processes have been put in place to meet the criteria for "good" expressive research, like those explored above.

Expressive Portrayal and Evocative Pedagogy

Expressive portrayals are often responses to questions asked of some event or action: "How does it feel?" or "What was it like?" The language of the answer needs to be congruent with the question that generated it. Bob Dylan (1965) challenged the world to reflect on his world of alienated postmodern youth when he sang:

> How does it feel
> to be on your own…
> like a complete unknown
> like a rolling stone?

This feeling question is more often seen in songs and poetry, and yet there is so much to be learned in human social life from focused and careful answers to questions of this kind. What is suggested in this chapter is that rich texts seeking an appropriate response to "What was it like?" questions can be enriched by the expressive language of *evocative portrayal* involving the resources of aesthetics and the imagination: art, metaphor, contemplation.

On the riverbank in *The wind in the willows*, when the sticky and rather unconfident Mole asked Rat what he thought of his blackcurrant jam, Rat tasted it and then enthusiastically reported that it was like "Summer days and autumn hedgerows and winter tea cakes all rolled into one" (Grahame 1908, p. 48).

His response was hardly causative or analytical, nor indeed critical, but surely a great one-line expressive report to speak to Mole's fears and concerns assuring him of the enchantment that could be found in eating his jam. It is in texts like these that this different and not unfamiliar kind of knowledge appears. This is "experienced knowledge," partly subjective and partly objective and its presentation draws on artistic language and forms to form an evocative portrayal. It is this kind of expressive knowing that evocative pedagogy in work and career choice seeks to generate with the help of artistic and dramatic processes.

This section suggests a way in which evocative pedagogy can be built into a structured process for general vocational and career guidance, and gives an example of how this approach has been applied for people considering adult education as a possible career.

The evocative pedagogy described here is an oblique and non-didactic approach to vocational or career education that seeks to engage the imagination and the heart of the participants. These aspirants to and trainees in a specific career can be invited to take part in a dialogic process that uses forms of drama in order to evoke a response from an imagination that has been aesthetically "captured" and a heart that has been empathetically "moved."

Through a process of trial and revision with different groups of trainees, the following curriculum has emerged. The process is divided into four stages with some further division into subsections. The four stages are:

- Stage one: orientation
- Stage two: revealing the phenomenon
- Stage three: constructing the text
- Stage four: leaving space for uptake and action

The process involves a facilitator, an interviewee, and aspirants to or inquirers about the particular work or profession.

The following explores each of the four stages in general and also describes their application in a specific program for adult education aspirants and trainees. That program has been developed using a significant moment taken from a commercial movie drama, *Army Intelligence* (1994) starring Danny de Vito, which is concerned, among other things, with events and challenges in an adult educator's life in an army training camp.

Stage One: Orientation

The first stage is the preliminary engagement with learners. In order to invite an adventurous, unintimidated attitude, the facilitator provides an overview of the whole process and then outlines desirable dispositions: a sense of adventure, reflectivity, intensity, trust in the group, a willingness to be open to the experience and, if possible, to suspend pre-judgment, thus allowing the evocative process some room to work. The facilitator invites participants to dwell on their own attitudes, aspirations, and feelings about the career or work in question.

Once this is done, the second stage, the revelation of the phenomenon can begin.

Stage Two: Revealing the Phenomenon

The "phenomenon revelation" section has three subsections each with two further parts. The subsections are: (a) the drama enactment, (b) the role-play interview, and (c) the phenomenological depiction.

Drama Enactment

Part one: context delineation

The first part of the drama enactment is the *context delineation*, where the facilitator outlines the place, the plot, and the characters in the episode about to be portrayed. The following is the context delineation for the *Army Intelligence* example.

> The action for this film takes place in the classroom of an army initial training camp somewhere in the USA. Rago, virtually forced to take an educational job after losing his position as an advertising executive, is the reluctant and unskilled workplace trainer/educator working with army recruits with low communication skills and self-confidence. The alienated Rago, who has discovered an equal disquiet among his students, realizes that working with Shakespeare's "Hamlet" might be an interesting way for them to improve their communication skills. He gives out copies of the play and allocates parts to various trainees who are then invited to read them aloud as their part comes up in the play.
> In the film clip, one of the slower recruits, Melvin, who often dozes off in class, is finding it hard to reproduce the meter in his allocated line: "This above all, to thine own self be true." Rago, feeling his own and the students' frustration, searches for a way to communicate the rhythm of these lines. Suddenly he asks if there are any drummers in the group and gets the two who put their hand up to tap out the rhythm on a desk top. The others in the class take up the rhythm and applaud as the struggling recruit begins to get the beat. He laughs and shouts delight, which is shared by his beaming tutor.

Part two: drama enactment

In the second element, the *drama enactment*, the facilitator plays the episode from the selected cinema drama, which portrays dramatically and imaginatively a significant moment in the activity of an adult educator at work. In the adult education example the facilitator plays the clip of Bill Rago and the awakening of Melvin.

Once this is completed the process moves to the acts of participants themselves. The facilitator recruits one person to play the role of Bill Rago, the education practitioner (P) and another to be the interviewer (I). The role-players take their place in front of the other participants for the second section.

Role-Play Interview: Description and Interruptions

In the role-play interview, the interviewer (I) invites the "practitioner" (P) to provide a *narrative description* of what happened in her or his own words and then, in response to *questioning interruptions* from the interviewer, to attempt to provide a first-level revelation of the practitioner's subjective feelings. This becomes clear in the adult education example.

The example that follows has the interviewer (I) asking Bill Rago, the education practitioner (P), what had happened.

Narrative description of Bill Rago and Melvin's awakening

> I. What happened in your classroom just them?
> P. [with an assumed New York accent] I had been working with Hamlet as the student's project and each student had taken a character and was rehearsing the lines allocated to that part. I was starting to get the students into a cooperative space where I felt I could lead them into learning. I was having trouble getting Melvin, one of the recruits, to get his head around the Shakespearean meter. In desperation, I got a couple of the recruits to tap out the rhythm on a desk top: "*This* above *all* to thine *own* self be *true*."
> The other recruits took up the beat and slowly Melvin got the rhythm and everyone burst into applause. I had been afraid that he might have felt singled out in a bad way but I had already noticed that he was held in considerable affection by his fellow recruits and that some of them were concerned that he might not make the grade. When they chimed in to help, I could see that they were actually on his side and he seemed to be buoyed up.

Questioning interruption to "Bill Rago" and his subjective response

> I. What was that like? I mean as an experience for you as an educator?
> P. Well it was surprising and exhilarating. It was like going into a dark tunnel and emerging into the light; it was like a wave of joy sweeping everyone. The experience was like a surprise party, like the sun breaking through at dawn.
> I. How did you feel?
> P. I felt quite encouraged and warm. I was beginning to understand the grind of this kind of training and education, particularly with recruits for whom the whole training and education project was uncomfortable and usually unfruitful. I hadn't really expected or understood the uplift that might come to me when I could see that this recruit was "getting the message" and unexpectedly that the others could come in on my side.

The participants should be engaged by this stage as the process continues with the third subsection, the two-part phenomenological depiction.

Phenomenological Depiction

Returning from the example to the approach in general, the *phenomenological depiction,* the third part of the role-play interview, is a systematic attempt to allow the phenomenon under examination to be revealed through a succession of "re-visitings" of the event from different perspectives. This is conducted by prompting the "practitioner" in two ways: firstly by completing special "sentence stems" (a term coined by Crotty (1996a, p. 272) as a way of *naming* the experience from different perspectives) and secondly by *locating* the experience on five existential coordinates.

Naming the Experience by Completing the Phenomenological Sentences

In the first place, the facilitator asks the "practitioner" to complete the specifically phenomenological "sentence-stem questions" about the experience. These prompts,

or unfinished sentences, relate to the lived experience of the practice under examination as portrayed in the chosen film clip. A few samples of these sentence stems are the following:

- The particular practice as revealed in the event in the film clip is like…
- I picture this particular practice as revealed in the event in the film clip as…
- I recognize this particular practice as revealed in the event in the film clip as being…
- The metaphor(s) that best convey the experience of this particular practice as revealed in the event in the film clip is (are)…

This process can be difficult and the "practitioner" may need some advance preparation to assist in constructing the phenomenological text within the time available.

Locating the Experience on the Five Existential Coordinates

The second method of generating the phenomenological depiction involves setting five so-called "existential questions" around the event. The first question focuses on the *sense of mood* and originates in Les Todres' development of Heidegger's idea of "mood." As he writes:

> Heidegger (1962) has used the word *befindlichkeit* to refer to that form of prereflective understanding that interprets the mood-like disclosure of things. Befindlichkeit as a form of understanding is thus always involved when we understand another's experience or when we read the text of a human situation—we relate ourselves to its mood—and can thus understand with our hearts. (2007, p. 10)

The question of naming the mood is directed to the "practitioner" reflecting on the event presented in the film clip. The interviewer asks: "How would you describe your mood during this event?"

The question of mood can be a key to the way the experience is registering in a person's consciousness during some powerful event in her or his professional life. In an earlier piece, Les Todres and his colleagues wrote that

> Mood is intimate to how we find ourselves. It is a powerful messenger of the meaning of our situation … Mood "sniffs out" the situation and has already gathered the significance of things in immediate, bodily-felt ways. (Todres et al. 2006, p. 5)

The remaining *existential questions* originate in the ideas of Merleau-Ponty, and have been further developed by van Manen:

> These four existentials of lived body, lived space, lived time and lived relation to the other can be differentiated but not separated. They all form an intricate unity which we call the life world—our lived world. (1990, p. 105)

This becomes clear in the application of this part of the approach to the adult education example. In this example, the participant playing the part of Bill Rago is asked to attempt firstly to recall and "re-picture" the experience by completing a set of Crotty sentence stems relating to the experience and then secondly to describe the event as a mood-modifying and bodily, temporal, spatial, and relational experience.

Example: Using Crotty's Sentence Stems

The participant playing Bill Rago, reflecting on what the educational experience of Melvin's awakening was like, is invited to complete sentence stems, each carrying variations to the basic phenomenological questions: "What was adult education practice in that event like for you as a lived experience?"

- Educational practice in this event seems to be catching and riding the wave of interest and challenge.
- I depict educational practice in this event in graphic form as a celebratory dance of achievement.
- What comes to light when I focus on educational practice in this event is a hundred searches and a burst of joy.
- What is uncovered when I focus on educational practice in this event is anxiously seeking the way, pushing to birth and subsequent elation.
- What unfolds for me as I dwell on educational practice in this event is the delight of breakthrough.
- I depict educational practice in this event in poetic terms as "I believe she's got it."
- The metaphor(s) that best conveys the experience of educational practice in this event is (are):
  - Learning birthing with the learning midwife
  - Learning wizard casts a learning spell over everyone

While these images remain in the mind another set of windows on the experience—the existential coordinates—are provided.

Example: Five Existential Coordinates of Bill Rago's Experience

- My general *mood* was upbeat. I had given out copies of Hamlet and I felt a surge of interest so that my mood was a kind of unstoppable and overflowing optimism. I suspect it was not terribly deep but I suspect it was built from a general affirmation that had been building up as we got to know each other.
- As a *bodily experience* educating as an experience for me in that moment was quick and exhilarating. My heart was pounding and my whole body glowed with exuberance.
- Educating at that moment as an *experience in time* was a high moment. Time was compressed from the prolonged agony of waiting for the trainee to connect to the quick click of the moment of breakthrough.
- Educational practice in that moment *as a spatial experience* was an experience of spiraling together, of the space contracting into a space of closeness and safety and warmth. It was movement in and out of the group closing and opening and up and down and up again as Melvin stood, sat, and stood.
- Educational practice at that moment as a *social relational experience* was a strongly social experience, a collaborative, connecting, enriching, happy-making experience.

The third stage seeks to bring the richness of the imagery evoked in the previous exercises into a representative text.

Stage Three: Constructing the Representational Text

This third stage is putting together the *representational text*. It has three parts. The first is the *phenomenological distillation*, in which key themes of the representations of lived experience of the adult educator are listed and clustered. In the second part, which is called the *drafting* process, these themes are rendered into text in a couple of compressed paragraphs to which all the participants in the process are invited to contribute. Although most of the data for this stage is taken and distilled from earlier processes largely performed by the person playing the "practitioner" role, all participants are invited to participate. When the drafting process comes to an end, a final version is prepared which becomes the *display*. The *display* refers to final descriptions of the phenomenon of adult education practice as revealed in the episode presented. These are couched in the language and drawing on the imagery that has emerged from the distilling and drafting processes. Sometimes it is a piece of prose; at other time this final form is done with poetry or mixed media. Final displays can be written or in some other way or presented pictorially. They could possibly be performed as a piece of theater. They are offered to be read, listened to, and reflected on by the whole group.

The following examines the process of text construction in the case of adult educational practice where final displays were read to the group and then presented in a designated gallery on one of the walls of the classroom.

Distilling

The first part of this stage is *distilling*, where the completed sentence stems in the previous section are examined and distilled thematic representations are constructed. The following are an attempt by one group:

- Long build up and quick completion
  - Prolonged agony and quick healing
  - A slow glide and a celebratory dance
  - Anxiously seeking the way, pushing to birth and subsequent elation
  - Nervous apprehension and the delight of breakthrough
  - A hundred searches and a burst of joy
- Insider challenge to insider
  - Catching the wave of interest and challenge
  - Collaborating
  - Challenging, connecting
  - Pulling away and spiraling together to safety and warmth

- Risk feeling
  - Risky and happy making
- Exhilaration
  - Quick and exhilarating, bodies glowing with exuberance
  - Enriching
- I believe she's got it
  - The learning birthing with the learning midwife
  - Learning wizard casts a learning spell over everyone

Drafting

In the *drafting phase* the distilled fragments are collated into a tight text seeking to provide a concise portrayal that carries the weight of the distilled elements. The following is one attempt.

> Adult education practice as it was experienced by Rago was risky and challenging. It caught him up in a prolonged process in which sustained and careful engagement gave birth to a moment of exhilarating joy—unexpected and heartfelt—and he could see and knew intuitively that the opposite could also occur.
> For Rago the experience of adult education practice in that moment meant being connected to the hearts and minds of the people for whom he was the educator, unable to use direct influence and placed in the role of midwife to the birth of learning as it occurred unexpectedly and from any quarter.
> It was Rago's experience, validated in this and other events of his educational practice represented in the film, that adult education was a process of the group—the insiders—removing resistance and amplifying the collective taste for learning.

Display

Finally in the *display* phase the writer is challenged to find the most appropriate way to craft this in a readable expressive text. Such a text might be a poem, a painting, a dance—some form of expressive writing that takes readers back and into the lived experience of adult education practice.

In some ways the film itself represented Bill's lived experience tacitly through framing various contextualized moments. The dramatized process attempts to reveal the lineaments of this lived experience.

The following poem uses a more structured literary genre: a short verse attempting to reveal essential elements of the educator's lived experience.

> **Learning flight**
> His turn has come
> He's on the line;
> He's got to stand
> And take his place.

Our weight is strained
to turn that inert, giant,
resistant wheel
and get it going;
hardly turning, slowly turning
slowly more and more;
All together,
calling to him
chasing fear away,
faster and faster, deeper, deeper
Running, calling,
calling one to one another.
Our spinning flywheel holds momentum,
his engine sputters into life
he pulls away,
takes flight and soars
above us
as we cheer.

This display, dwelt on by the participants who have gone through the intervening stages, is designed to lead to a space for uptake and action reflection, which is the fourth and final stage.

Stage Four: Leaving Space for Uptake and Action

And so as the displayed text emerges on the whiteboard or butcher's paper, the two related moments of the fourth and final stage, *uptake* and *choice for action* begin. The first is the special moment of *uptake reflection*. Participants are invited to ask the question: "If the experience of such an event is validly portrayed and speaks to us then what does this actually mean or require for adult educators in practice?"

They are then prompted to read and re-read the displayed text in a reflective, contemplative way and to form an idea of their own gut-level reaction and to what extent they are deeply moved by the idea of doing and enduring something similar to what was portrayed in the film clip.

The second part of the fourth stage, which follows hard on its predecessor, is *choice precipitation*. Participants in the process who have been involved in its various stages are given time to talk about the impact on them of the reflective phenomenological exercise and to reflect on whether they are aware of any energy attracting them to the work portrayed or repelling them.

For adult educators in training, space is given for the underlying constant question: Is this for me? Can I see myself doing something like Bill Rago did to encourage adults to learn? Here it is not a logical, measured, rational question but a "vocational" question coming from the heart and the imagination.

Since the story of Bill Rago's breakthrough is a narrative of struggle and endurance followed by achievement, it represents a typical satisfying moment in the working life of educators and trainers of adults. This portrayal of a typical but high

energy and fundamentally successful episode of adult educational work does not cover times of loss and frustration when, despite the educator's efforts, learning does not appear to eventuate for at least some of the learners. This would require further sessions where the agenda would be about living with loss and frustration.

Conclusion

The argument of this chapter is that the process just described, the laboriously produced multi-layered portrayal, is evocative in itself, "showing" rather than "telling" without the use of the specious tools of proselytism or advertising. The expressive phenomenological process described above seeks to base itself on a critical approach that "brackets" out given "readings" of experience and an aesthetic approach that uses metaphor and poetry to make the lived experience come alive in people's imagination and in their heart.

The significant point here is that considerable energy goes into focusing on finding ways to represent as vividly as possible what the lived experience is like: not "should be" or "could be" but actually *is* as it presents itself to the contemplating, observing person. The evocative power of the process draws on the aesthetic energy of vividly presented and dramatized experience with the intrinsic attractiveness [and unattractiveness!] of lived reality rather than the imputed attractiveness and "spin" of advertising.

Not everyone can be expected to be charmed or enchanted by vivid representations of the lived experience of an event in adult education practice or some other pursuit unless that revealed experience is recognized as something to which one feels "called" or even "enchanted." This experience can represent a powerful evocation, provoking the telling phrase: "If that's what it's like, count me 'in' – [or 'out' as the case may be!]"

A key question still remaining at the end of this exploration concerns the impact and predictability of evocative pedagogies in the current postmodern culture. The attempt to work with the affective, imaginal part of the psyche moves onto a precarious world inhabited by the commercial image industries whose bread and butter is "evoked desire" and against which many people have developed a kind of detached immunity which disengages them from too enthusiastic an uptake of attractive or confronting images appearing on television and film advertising.

Although the curriculum pursued here has processes seeking to safeguard imaginal responses evoked from the film clip discussions from being too quickly discounted as yet another emotional response to any other media experience, the chance of being almost immediately forgotten is still a possibility. This is particularly of concern since ruminative time is needed for the mythopoetic process to grow and deepen.

This leads to the important challenge for the educator, as cueing and predisposing students is part of his or her role. In a formal education program, the assessment culture is such that students will usually comply with predisposing directions from the facilitator, who needs to understand and be enthusiastic about the process.

Over the last few years, in an adult educator education program when a version of this evocative curriculum was implemented in a relaxed manner without rushing, two helpful elements were mentioned in feedback. One concerned the quality of the phenomenological texts that emerged from the interview with the "adult educator." If they were arresting, insightful, and recognizable, the subsequent reflective process seemed to become deepened and more sustained and ultimately more satisfying. The other factor seemed to be the appropriateness and timing of prompts from the facilitator.

Several features of the evocative vocational curriculum for adult educators have been examined: its practice, its foundation in mythopoetic pedagogy, and its links to expressive phenomenology. The illustration of the method applied to adult education practice has been presented in some depth and its strengths and weaknesses noted.

Drama and role-playing are not commonly employed in contemporary instructional curricula, with its emphasis on measurable outcomes. It remains to be seen whether, as it did once, this alternative approach with its links to drama and the aesthetic life will attract other practitioners to explore, apply, and modify it.

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Chapter 19
Conclusion: The Mythopoetic Challenge

Timothy Leonard and Peter Willis

The insight that the human mind is a function of imagination is the unifying thread of the mythopoetic project in curriculum and pedagogy. It is clearly the underlying commitment of the authors in this collection, whose work is filled with an uncommon hope in a time dominated by forces that would kill imagination in favor of linear, controllable rationality.

Of course imagination and the stories that it generates is never killed as such, but it can be repressed and heavily disguised. Current western militarist culture has sought to control human imagination through the "spin making" of image industries under control of state and large corporations and the unfettered appropriation of the power of the imagination in advertising. Curriculum in cultural studies that attempts to unmask the iron fist in the velvet glove of such advertising and media "spin" has been a valuable contribution to a socially aware curriculum. It does the learners a service in evoking critical attention and skepticism towards the truth claims of consumerist culture but of course the critical approach tends to be focused on the important but not exclusive arena of logical rationality. Logical rationality, this book has argued, needs to be complemented and enriched by the creative dimensions of human imagining with its links to the heart as well as the head and this has become more and more necessary.

A commonly held contemporary stance that curriculum must be a process contained within mathematically measurable parameters is not neutral. It is hegemonic. It is a corollary of the view that all persons are commodities, that all human interactions are markets, and that all conflicts are wars. It has two major toxic elements. Through its passion for control, this linear/rational orientation towards education has the potential to crush the imagination of its teachers and produce a culture that is literally mindless. Fundamentalist upheavals in the world's religions are the most newsworthy reactions to this imperialist rationalism and, having gathered momentum for almost a century, these movements have become a credible threat in their own right to the future of imagination, mind, and reason itself. Paradoxically, then, an unbalanced and narrow rationality has spawned two dark enemies of reason: firstly, its own insistence that all knowledge is derived from science and technology; and secondly, the fundamentalist response that all knowledge is contained in the literal interpretation of divinely revealed texts.

T. Leonard, P. Willis (eds.), *Pedagogies of the Imagination,*

As the essays of this collection demonstrate, there is hope that educators and curriculum workers can resist this domination of technical rationality and re-establish imagination to its central place in the curriculum through the process of mythopoesis. The mythopoetic is at once traditional and progressive; holistic and emancipatory. It can be practised in general education across the curriculum as well as in professional education and training. It uses story-telling, conversation, social-dramatic play, religious experience, spiritual practice, informal logic, critical analysis, and a comprehensive sense of the beauty of mind and matter in a synthetic manner that seemed unavailable even during the remarkable era of progressive education.

Though some are skeptical of the potential of mythopoesis to enter into the mainstream of education thought and practice, we are not. In the view of the majority of the writers represented in this volume, myth establishes meaning in the lives of persons, communities, states, and nations whether we notice it or not. The task of this book has been to push educators to take notice. By taking notice of the myth of western superiority, for example, one can, with Peter Bishop, imagine its power as experienced by Aboriginal peoples and find ways to educate for reconciliation. By listening to Mary Doll's experience of imagining, with Edward Albee, the circumstance of a man in love with a goat one can learn to "imagine the other," which may be a prerequisite to all meaningful learning, particularly in a world where awareness of human differences is becoming unavoidable. Some human differences are, of course, the result of human callousness and indifference, and the mythopoetic practice of Brenton Prosser in Chapter 15 may awaken in the teacher the realization of the profound incoherence of social inequality in the modern world. While not shunning a Deweyan problem-solving model to global inequalities, Prosser demonstrates the power of myth to help teachers stare these dismaying inequalities in the face in a manner beyond the capacities of mere critical theory. Out of such awareness grows the *practical* in education as understood by Aristotle and Joseph Schwab.

The authors of this book, of course, are not alone in their pursuit of imagination in curriculum and pedagogy. Recent research in neurobiology confirms the underlying physical unity of imagination, feeling, emotion, and thinking. The work of many phenomenological and qualitative researchers in education such as Kieran Egan, Max Van Manen, and Robert Bullough, postmodernists such as William Pinar and Joe Kincheloe, and psychologists such as Les Todres, Steen Halling, and Howard Gardner are complementary to the work of mythopoesis. But the movement ought not to be confused with qualitative research, with multiple intelligences research, or with postmodernism. While mythopoesis draws upon such movements, it also refocuses them by asking: how can we use our imaginations and our myths to engage students in the critical pursuit of personal and political meaning and living?

We think the essays presented here shed light on this question. We are certain that many teachers throughout the English-speaking world do this every day and have further light to offer. The great need now is to find those teachers, to unearth their work, and make them known. The struggle of imagination against mindlessness must be joined every day.

Index

Items in bold refer to footnotes