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Hermaphrodite as Healing Image: Connecting a Mythic Imagination to Education

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[T]he underlying idea of the psyche proves it to be a half bodily, half spiritual substance, an *anima media natura*, as the alchemists call it, an hermaphroditic being capable of uniting the opposites, but who is never complete in the individual unless related to another individual. The unrelated human being lacks wholeness, for he can achieve wholeness only through the soul, and the soul cannot exist without its other side, which is always found in a “You.” Wholeness is a combination of I and You, and these show themselves to be parts of a transcendent unity whose nature can only be grasped symbolically. (Jung, CW16, par. 454)

To speak of healing and transformation begs the questions: “What does the soul want?” and “How do we meet it?” (Hillman, 1983/2005). To address these questions, we need to “Turn to images.” Jung writes: “Every psychic process is an image and an ‘imagining’” (CW 11, par. 889) and these images are “as real as you – as a psychic entity – are real” (CW 14, par. 753). For Jung, the term image arises from “poetic usage” (CW 6, par. 743); it does not arrive via thought nor is it the outcome of perception. Images arrive already as givens of life. Images are spontaneous, primordial, always arising. Image is the soul presenting itself. Everything else – the world, other people, other forms – are mediated to consciousness by this poetic ancestral factor: the image.

Jung uses the term “image” in a variety of ways. He writes of actual visual images such as paintings by Picasso; he writes of inner mental visual image (dreams, active imagination, and visions); he writes of narrative images in myths for example; and, he writes about image as psyche. This last type of image Hockley (2010), in his study of film and meaning making, has named the “third image” because the “meaning of film partly lies outside the film itself” (p. 13). He explains that the meaning one gives to a film, as in life, is a result of negotiation with the film text (or narrative, myth, symbol) and the interplay of the personal and collective (conscious and unconscious) aspects of the psyche. Drawing an analogy to a therapeutic encounter, Hockley further elaborates:

Such meaning lies not just in the words or emotions of the client but arises from a shared sense that is momentarily constellated in the consulting room. In short, meaning in therapy is something that is co-created and this “meaning” is evoked in the way that Jung writes about image. (p. 12)

Image, herein, is used in a variety of ways, all best understood in metaphorical terms; however, its overall usage is that as third image, a third that unfolds through a combination of text and a more personal and subjective experience be it in a cinema, consulting or class room. Interpreted in this way, “image” offers a powerful medium through which to understand one’s relationship to the world.

Myth & Archetypal Images

To ignore the realm of the mythic is to ignore human imagination and its central role in psychic life. Mircea Eliade (1963) suggested that “myth narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in primordial Time” (p. 5). In other words, myth tells how through the deeds of supernatural beings, a reality came into existence, be it the whole or only a fragment of reality – a particular kind of human behavior, an institution, a species. By enacting and incorporating myths into our daily lives, by recalling and bringing the gods and goddesses of the past into the present, humans become their contemporaries and simultaneously are

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transported into primordial time. This transportation becomes reconnection for one can gain a sense of her origins and feel the process of history in the present and time as divine.

Joseph Campbell (1968) said, “Mythological symbols touch and exhilarate centers of life beyond the reach of vocabularies of reason and coercion” (p. 4). While this exhilaration is missing from many peoples’ lives today, the mythic patterns that underlie human existence make available empowering structures that affect our health, vitality and psychological well-being. Our typical sense of personal identity (separate, individual) is continuously threatened to dissolve into the mythic archetypes of the collective unconscious, until we come to see the inherent transpersonal (interconnected) aspect of human nature. Once this connection is recognized, one is in a position to construct an authentic selfhood (to undergo the conscious process of becoming familiar with one’s psychological strengths and limitations).

Within the Western tradition, Plato and Aristotle held different attitudes toward myth both of which still inform its usage today. Their differences might be regarded as the opposition of *logos* and *mythos* (Rowland, 2010). Logos denotes that myth produces or leads to the production of abstract ideas or knowledge. Here, “Plato believed that the ultimate reality was a transcendent realm of forms, not directly accessible to the human mind” (p. 91). He offered a hero myth to illustrate his logos. Recall the cave wherein the inhabitants see shadows moving about on the wall and take them for truth. Only the hero-philosopher will seek reality and try to leave the cave for the sunlight beyond its entrance. So, “truth is logos because it exceeds the story, the myth that structures it” (p. 91). As such, myth has been tamed, “domesticated” (Coupe, 1997, p. 105); it has become an allegory.

Conversely, Aristotle regarded narrative as dynamic. As Arendt (1958) argued, “The chief characteristic of the specifically human life . . . is that it is always full of events which ultimately can be told as a story. . . . It is of this life, *bios*, as distinguished from mere *zoe*, that Aristotle said that it ‘somehow is a kind of action (*praxis*)’” (p. 70). Storytelling humanizes time by transforming it from an impersonal passing of fragmented moments, narratives that over time form an identity, into a pattern, a plot, a mythos. Mythos is the emplotment within the writing of history; it is not a form extractable from it. It is not allegorical because it generates nothing outside itself; its form has no other, no referent. Mythos, rather, is a recurring story that shapes meaning without recourse to anything new. Myth as mythos, then, is not about referring back to a previous version of itself as some kind of primal truth (Rowland, 2010). Mythos is endlessly rewritten and, thus, continuously reinvented of identity (fluid, multiple and contradictory) and consciousness. “The casting of myth as mythos,” as Rowland puts it, “welcomes

the Jungian notion of the unconscious in the capacity to re-generate stories of being. Mythos individuates at a personal and social level and so renews a culture polarized by frozen allegories of identity” (pp. 91-2).

In other words, allegory/logos constructs meaning by *separating out* truth from story, matter, body and history, while mythos/eros constructs meaning by *shaping from within* story, matter, body and history (Rowland, 2010). As such, these two types of myth shape and reflect two types of consciousness. According to Rowland, allegory sponsors the human practice of making knowledge from separation and discrimination, by filtering myth into rational concepts and a very particular notion of reason. Mythos does so through incarnation, by connecting bodily, erotically, relationally through story to a myth that is one of infinite in-corporations of the other through desire. So consciousness, in various forms, has itself a mythical origin.

Founded upon psychological image – those archetypal patterns of human experience which are cast in myths and tales – archetypal or imaginal psychology is firmly seated within the culture of Western imagination, arts and ideas. Archetypal psychology like aesthetic perception places primacy on soul and accesses the depths of the unconscious through images often presented by myths and dreams (McConeghey, 2003). Since aesthetic perception views psychology as the study of soul, the “new eye” regains the intuitive power of perception without needing a metaphysical (logos) presupposition. According to Jung (1984), “we cannot know better than the unconscious and its intimations,” and in the unconscious world there is “a fair chance of finding what we seek in vain in the conscious world. Where else could it be [?]” (p. 196). The task is to stop seeking in the conscious world and begin to access the images available to us in the unconscious world. The foundation of aesthetic perception and thus the directing energy herein becomes psychological and poetical.

Hermes, Aphrodite & Hermaphrodite

The archetypal images of Hermes, Aphrodite and their child Hermaphrodite are attended closely to infer their potential significance to education, in particular, education as a transformative and therapeutic act. A transformative act is understood as a metamorphosis, a change in nature or psychological structure so as to live in a significantly different way; transmute. A therapeutic act is one that brings healing through the respect of an integrating process towards increasing psychological wholeness whereby no “side” is excluded. Indeed, this exploration begins with the retelling of the myth of Hermaphrodite and a water nymph whereby two conflicting entities come into union, and thus offer a reshaping from within the myth for education. These two figures symbolize psychological development where in one moment a figure weaves in one direction and in the next moment folds back, simultaneously seeking a third image of something not yet conceived. This child,

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Hermaphrodite, born of the God of borders and hermeneutics, communication and silence, trickery and thievery; and the Goddess of aesthetics and ethics, beauty and goodness, creativity and “justice” (Hillman, 2008, p. 26), conjoins two complementary entities and reminds that one is never-only-one. Hermes embodies the interpretive act and Aphrodite the creative one. Elaboration of these qualities will unfold through amplification of these two guiding images.

Hermaphrodite joins not only these two deities but also the fields of education and depth psychology, including the latter’s themes of hermetic secrets and hermeneutics infused with erotic imagination – links that will become apparent (Hillman, 1983/2005). The goal of healing on both personal and collective levels is to be in a dialogical relationship with fluctuating degrees of tension as found between conscious and unconscious, masculine and feminine, public world and private soul. Named a “hermetic paradox,” the bi-ness of a hermaphrodite holds then transcends and dissolves therein the conflict of opposites, as a “particular consciousness in itself” only to re-engage in a new dynamic (López-Pedraza, 1989, p. 37). López-Pedraza (1989) suggests that the imagery of a hermaphrodite gives a decisive indication of both transferential and psychic movement between two. Transference and counter transference are basic phenomena in depth psychology but in the field of education, with its focus on outcomes and methods, unconscious interpersonal dynamics between a teacher and student (adult and child), for example, are not recognized or acknowledged. By looking to images that bring the fields into dialogue, each is in a better position to develop through this renewed kinship.

Let us begin with a common yet one-sided telling of the Greek myth of Hermaphrodite’s birth. Born of Aphrodite and Hermes, Hermaphrodite was an incredibly beautiful boy. As with many young men, he grew bored of his home surroundings and soon ventured out on his own. He travelled cities far and wide. One day on his many walks, he came upon a lovely wooded area. Here a beautiful water nymph named Salmacis saw him and was struck by passion. She pursued him but Hermaphrodite rejected her. Days passed and when he thought that she had left the woods, he returned to bathe. Unknown to him, Salmacis was hiding behind a tree. Waiting patiently till he was well immersed, she then leapt forth and jumped into the water. Wrapping herself around Hermaphrodite, she kissed and caressed him, even as he struggled against her advances. While in this conflicted embrace, she called to the gods to keep them joined forever. Her wish was granted and their two bodies twisted into one. In his grief and shame, Hermaphrodite made a vow, cursing the pool, and thus, cursing the unconscious, so that anyone who bathed within it would be devoured as well (Ovid, 1955, pp. 102-104).

This entangled form, representing an undifferentiated psychological state, suggests for the male (Hermaphrodite) a struggle against the feminine embrace (Salmacis/anima). While masculine consciousness seeks separation (leaving “home” and mother, a place of psychological familiarity), it cannot yet entirely break free from the mother (the feminine represented in Salmacis) and is pulled back into the water or the unconscious. Unable to be playful because he is overwhelmed by emotions and engulfed by closeness, the heroic ego is stuck and cursed to remain fused. If he could have engaged with Salmacis in the woods, a location that represents conscious terrain, or if he was able to get out of the water, he would have experienced a different response. If a male’s ego is caught in the unconscious as symbolized in being caught in the water, his psyche cannot differentiate. For Salmacis, or feminine consciousness, she seeks union with the male while not realizing that her feminine power may threaten his autonomy. She is unconscious of the need to unite with her own inner masculine consciousness and embraces it in an outer form of a singular male. What can be inferred from this myth is that Salmacis is not overwhelmed with the feminine nor the unconscious and is able to play in the water and in the woods, suggesting a more differentiated psyche, and yet, she still seeks outside herself for completion. In looking psychologically to this mythic tale, albeit with a negative read, I draw from this chaotic, diffused primordial image of Hermaphrodite to lead us toward a new and differentiated consciousness as it might occur in the context of education. Ovid (1955) in his telling, describes the fusion thus:

As when a gardener grafts a branch on to a tree, and sees the two unite as they grow, and come to maturity together, so when their limbs met in that clinging embrace the nymph and the boy were no longer two, but a single form, possessed of a dual nature, which could not be called male or female, but seemed to be at once both and neither. (p. 104)

The interplay between masculine and feminine components within the psyche (both individual and collective) is a mark of development. The term “hermaphrodite” in this mythic context signals a non-differentiated psychological condition and its mature, differentiated form will be referred to as “androgyny,” (*aner*, meaning man; *gyne*, meaning woman) to use Singer’s term (1976/2000, p. 10).¹ As Jung describes in the opening passage, a related hermaphroditic being or an androgyny is capable of ‘uniting the opposites’ and can ‘achieve wholeness’ through integration and organic union with the transcendent other – the *anima mundi*.

While the Greeks of antiquity used the myth of Hermaphrodite to explain the intersex birth of one in fifty, it is used here not biologically as an intersex being, a physiological “abnormality” in which sex characteristics of the “opposite” sex are found in an individual. Rather, it is used to signal an older psycho-social androgyny that is revealed in the mythology of the ancients when the masculine and the

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feminine were not yet separated from nature and yet is still psychically available to us. I use the myth as mythos and its narrative image as a *pharmakon*, a healing agent, a reviving image in the context of education which is capable of restoring psychic hermaphroditism whereby the curse is itself the cure in aiding the development of a more differentiated consciousness. To address the contemporary hermaphroditic being as psychic image without taking into account its older form, would be to address only the isolated and symptomatic manifestations without noticing their archetypal bases which we have inherited from generations long passed (Singer, 1976/2000). Many once believed that humanity was shaped after a divine image of original wholeness, an androgynous god or goddess as creator-creatix (Singer, 1976/2000). In Hindu mythology, for example, this divine wholeness is represented by the god *Ardhanarisvara* who is the union of *Shiva* and *Shakti*, the symbol of cosmic androgyny.

Focusing on the image of Hermaphrodite points to the importance and value of recognizing these two elements – masculine and feminine – to varying degrees of conscious integration within each person as well as within groups or organizations. For Jung the recognition of the contrasexual aspect was not associated with sexual behaviour between straight, queer or gay individuals, but rather with an individual's intrapsychic functioning. Becoming androgynous begins with a conscious recognition of the masculine and feminine potential in every individual and is realized as each of us develops her or his capacity to build harmonious relations between these two aspects within her or his self.

Alchemical Images & Process

A series of alchemical images illustrates the process of psychological development or individuation through four variations of the union of opposites as symbolized in the relations and union of feminine, moon (silver), and masculine, sun (gold), the antithetical principles of the initial state of chaos, of prime matter. *Prima materia* is viewed as the raw state of consciousness from which all states of consciousness emerged (mineral, vegetable, animal and human, including the state of illuminated consciousness whilst in the earthly body). This process tracks the movement toward wholeness and culminates in a marriage of 'I and You' whereby 'these show themselves to be parts of a transcendent unity whose nature can only be grasped symbolically.' Central to this unfolding lies an understanding and respect of the feminine, not as a thing but rather a very fluid and subtle process. Further, while the intrapsychic movement is core, the bridge to and between pedagogy and psychotherapy is through the relational component – a new image and story of mutuality – 'the soul cannot exist without its other side, which is always found in a "You."'

The alchemical process can be simplified into four stages of development corresponding to four steps of the alchemical marriage: *nigredo*, *albedo*, *citrinitas* and *rubedo*. At each stage there is an intensifying of purification, followed by a union, a *coniunctio*, with the fire at that stage, a rebirth of a new sense of self and a death of the former sense of self. At each stage the fire, the main agent in the continuous process of transmutation, is doubly intense as the preceding fire. One may also read the fire as an intensification of awakening love in the heart of the male by his *anima* or by her *animus* in the case of a female.

Nigredo or “blackening,” known experientially through darkness, despair and depression, represents the purification of the earthly nature within each of us, lived as attachment to worldly objects such as one’s body, possessions and family. As long as one remains attached to or unconsciously identified with such things and their corresponding emotions (such as pride, desire, fear, envy), one is internally separated and divided. In letting go of such attachment, a kind of dying, one can discover a renewed quality to life wherein one’s inner guidance (*animus* or *anima*) is awakened. When a physical union with one’s soul nature is experienced, the first alchemical marriage with “earth nature” has been achieved. Jung references Gerard Dorn, student of the famous sixteenth-century Swiss alchemist-physician, Paracelsus, who described the “reconciliation of hostile elements” and the union of alchemical opposites that formed a correspondence to an interior oneness or *unio mentalis* (CW 14, par. 670). This union occurs in the mind of the individual as knowledge of the self through an “overcoming of the body” – its instincts and affects and its sensuous desires – a psychic equilibration of opposites (CW 14, par. 670).

Albedo, “whitening” or moon nature, experienced as a brightness and exhilaration of life, requires a further purification of one’s psyche and a receptivity to one’s soul nature, which originally incarnated free of worldly impressions, family and culture. At this point, becoming soul conscious is realizing who “I am” as an individual soul and what one’s qualities and gifts are. For those who pursue their therapeutic process thoroughly, deeply and persistently, this period leads to a heightened spiritual awareness and purpose. As in the previous stage, a time is reached for a second union. Now the sense of self identifies with the soul nature – the unity of spirit and soul is conjoined with the body. Here one has acquired knowledge of her or his paradoxical wholeness, namely knowledge of the shadow.

Citrinitas, “yellowing” or sun nature finds a withdrawal of lunar, reflective light to a point of complete darkness. Sometimes this stage is called “black light” for the sense of self as a separate individual dies. It is a complete dying of the dualistic state of mind that perceives subject and object as separate. Here consciousness is transformed into solar light that awakens the sense of revelation, a deep intuitive knowing and revelatory knowledge. The consummation of the third stage can be expected only when the unity of spirit, soul and body is made one with

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the original *unus mundus*. Stated otherwise, this stage enacts contemplation of the potential world outside of time. The third alchemical marriage reveals the anima figure as a heavenly woman, an object of spiritual love, and the animus figure as a spiritual guide, guru or professor – someone seen as elevated and spiritualized. For Dorn, this third stage of conjunction is the relation of the personal with the universal; psychologically, it is a synthesis of the conscious with the unconscious.

Rubedo or “redding” awakens the desire to return to earth nature and to fully incarnate her or his “illuminated” consciousness into the mind and body. Here a purifying fourth fire of fusion must form a new coagulation of spirit and matter. The culmination of stage three leaves the alchemist completely “free” in a state of pure spirit – beyond space, time and form yet without a consciousness of body or mind. Thus, the fourth stage involves the death of this freedom and conscious state of pure spirit as an individual soul that desires to be embodied without the sense of separation from its original pure state of oneness, often destined in personal connection of certain people through the Self. It is only when the soul is incarnated in the mind and body that it can realize its state of spiritual completeness. In other words, Tao or Creatrix consciousness born into the living of the earth, realizes its Creatrix-like nature consciously as an illuminated, transcendent entity and its state of embodied oneness with the cosmic whole. This uniting of the spirit and soul with the mind and body represents the final and most important alchemical marriage. Here the anima becomes the object of mystic love; the animus becomes an illuminated one. Simply, it is a timeless relationship with the Self in another person, with his or her wholeness, with the unity of opposites within him or her. Only love, not intellect nor emotion, can apprehend another person in this way. This form of love, Jung describes:

is not transference and not friendship in the usual sense, nor sympathy either. It is more primitive, more primordial, and more spiritual than anything we are capable of describing. The upper story is no longer you or I, it is the many of which you yourself are a part, and everyone is part of it whose heart you touch. There differentness does not prevail, but rather immediate presence. It is an eternal mystery; how could I ever explain it? (cited in von Franz, 1999, pp. 53-54)

This union leads to the creation of a new kind of consciousness symbolized by what Dorn called *caelum*, a symbolic prefiguration of the Self (CW 14, par. 770).

From alchemy, one can assume the desired realization of “the whole man [sic] was conceived as a healing of organic and psychic ills” since *caelum* was considered a universal medicine (CW 14, par. 770). It was also regarded as the “balsam and elixir of life,” a “living stone,” and above all, “it lasts for all eternity;”

“though alive, it is unmoved;” it transforms the perishable into the imperishable; it “multiplies itself indefinitely; it is simple and therefore universal, the union of all opposites” (CW 14, par. 770). Psychologically, the caelum – “blue liquid” or “divine water” – evolved from a process of reconnecting emotions (affects) with consciousness; and so, it refers to “a certain heavenly substance hidden in the human body” that is lured out by “art” – the art of alchemy, the art of inner work (CW 14, par. 681). While caelum has a thousand names, it also signifies the anima mundi or world soul in matter, and is known as an androgyne, related hermaphrodite and an hermaphroditic *filius philosophorum* – the Philosopher’s Son or the consciously realized Self. Wholeness, as Jung describes and as alchemists illustrated, is achieved through integration with the world soul.

Archetypal Image ~ Hermes

As with caelum, the curative elements for current ills in education can be extracted from the archetypal images of Hermaphrodite’s parentage. His father is Hermes. As god of communication and silence, commerce and burglary, his life began as a stone, a *herm*² or to some, a heap of stones, a *hermax* or *hermaion*, a boundary-marker demarcating boundaries between villages, cities and regions, landmarks fixing borders and frontiers. Later he became the patron of secret and “dangerous” arts, in particular, writing. His long kinship with letters, music, play and poetry signals something is happening, becoming, changing – something chaotic, messy, even distrustful yet ripe with potential.

Having created the instruments of music and gained the art of divination – of reading the signs of the world – and with his new responsibilities of mind, Hermes next joins with the Fates in devising a number of new technologies: the alphabet, astronomy (another tool for augury and predicting the future), musical scales, boxing, a system of weights and measures, the cultivation of olives. As master of oaths, Hermes is the god of rhetoric and magical formulae. . . . Throughout Hermes’ stories runs the thread of energetic invention – his works are not only artistic but also artful: crafty, clever, and ingenious. (Hirshfield, 1997, p. 187)

Hermes – “Lord of the Roads” – as he came to be known, also marks our psychological roads and boundaries; he marks the borderlines of our psychological frontiers and marks the territory where, in our psyche the foreign and alien begins; by extension, he marks the lines of separation among disciplines like education, psychology, mythology and philosophy. He later became identified with the Egyptian Thoth, an ibis-headed scribe of gods, and eventually transformed into Hermes *Trismegistus* (“Thrice-Great”), patron of alchemy, magic and the hermetic arts.

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Worshipped from Celtic Gaul (as god Lugh, inventor of the arts, patron of merchants and travellers), to India (as Buddha, Wisdom, the planet Mercury), Hermes became the focus of an unorthodox group in Ptolemaic Alexandria, which produced the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum*, a synthesis of ancient Egyptian and Indo-European wisdom traditions. Around this time, alchemy (the art of Khem, Egypt) took on its classical form.

Hermeticism travelled from its birth land to meet Judaism, Christianity, eventually Islam, then Hinduism and Taoism. As an art, not a religion or science, it is kin to perennial philosophy or the wisdom traditions. Until the advance of quantum physics, chaos and systems theory, modern science, through its theft of secrets, could be read as the suppression and realization of Hermeticism. Post-modern science, then, with its quantum leaps, strange attractors, quarks and black holes, begins the return of alchemy. Tracing farther back to its pagan roots, Hermeticism has its mark on contemporary biology (morphogenetic fields), ecology (greening the earth), homeopathy and biodynamics with its roots in the art of healing. Both plants and metals are used initially in this “new” medical alchemy, which Paracelsus called *spagyria*.

Paracelsus, inherited from the eighth century Iraqi Shiite alchemist Jabir ibn Hayyan the dyadic principles of sulphur and mercury. Realizing the dyad needed a third component for completion and transformation, salt was added. Sulphur is soul; mercury is spirit; and salt is body (Wilson, 2005). So through Hermes arose a Trinitarian response to the “problem” of dualism. Dorn’s description of the process of individuation is born out of these three alchemical principles (sulphur/soul, mercury/spirit and salt/body):

The three Principles of things are produced out of the four elements in the following manner: Nature, whose power is in her obedience to the Will of God, ordained from the very beginning, that the four elements should incessantly act on one another, so, in obedience to her behest, fire began to act on air, and produced Sulfur; air acted on water and produced Mercury; water, by its action on earth, produced Salt. Earth, alone, having nothing to act upon, did not produce anything, but became the nurse, or womb, of these three Principles [Sulfur, Mercury, and Salt]. . . . Whoever would be a student of this sacred science must know the marks whereby the three Principles are to be recognized, and also the process by which they are developed. For as the three Principles are produced out of four, so they, in their turn, must produce two, a male and a female; and these two must produce an incorruptible one, in which are exhibited the four [elements] in a highly purified and digested condition, and with their mutual strife hushed in

unending peace and good will. (cited in Edinger, 1995, pp. 275-276)

The conjunction of *sym* (together) and *ballein* (to throw) emphasizes the idea that the strange must be “thrown together” with the familiar to bridge the meaning between the known and the unknown. Jung called this bridge-building capacity of the psyche the transcendent function which frequently appears as a symbol or a third image. Symbol formation requires a union between conscious and unconscious parts of the psyche, a *coniunctio oppositorum* to alchemists. To each half the other is indispensable; as Anthony Stevens (1995) stated, “without conscious formulation the flow of unconscious images would go unrecognized; and if cut off from the unconscious flow, consciousness would be starved of nourishment” (p. 177). Through Hermes’ ability to hold the tension between two opposites, a third arises – the *mysterium coniunctionis* – and a doorway to transformation appears – as read earlier in the alchemical process and soon hereafter in the context of pedagogy and psychotherapy.

One of the most evocative hermetic symbols is the caduceus, the magical staff of Hermes, with its two intertwined snakes, in particular, a non-poisonous tree snake. Early descriptions report the staff wrapped not with snakes, but young, sprouting aspen branches which continue to be valued among First Nations groups and healers for their medicinal qualities. Alchemical imagery hints at Hermes’ healing qualities when Jung describes him as “a peacemaker, the mediator between the warring elements and producer of unity” (CW 14, par. 10).³ It is important to note, however, that as all symbols are ordered in the imagination by the archetypal propensity to dichotomize phenomena into opposites – a division that has multiple splits and pairings; thus, Hermes’ magical staff is encircled by the principle of sickness *and* healing (external methods and internal processes), while the two intertwining snakes symbolize evil and good, illness and wellness, outer and inner.

The mythological Hermes is also known poetically as a “journeyer [who] is at home while underway, at home on the road itself, the road being understood not as a connection between two definite points on the earth’s surface, but as a particular world” (Kerenyi, 1976/2003, p. 46). As one who journeys, he shifts from heights to lows, and back and forth between the known and unknown. As such, he is also the “doorkeeper,” known as *Pylaios*, “the one at the entrance” (p. 140). Two other epithets associated with Hermes – *strophaios*, meaning “standing at the door-post,” and *stropheus*, the “socket” – both signal the pivot where the door moves between two spaces. These epithets illustrate visually that Hermes is closely related to door hinges and thus to the entrance and the “middle point” of the socket, about which revolves the most decisive issue, namely the alternation between personal and public, conscious and unconscious, image and word. He *is* the hinge, the pivot place. As such, the modus and temperament of hermeneutic work, central to both education and psychology, is predominantly poetic (metaphoric), imaginal and

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suggestive, rather than logical, linear and dutiful to pre-established registers. Yet both spaces are needed, hence, the swinging between the two. It is at this pivot place that the pedagogic lives – the middle place between our personal and public lives – our ontological and epistemological positions and our teaching and curricular activities. Interpretation is pedagogic at its heart – in both educative and therapeutic practice.

Interpretive work strives to create the experience of the learning self by bringing inner thoughts, feelings, memories, fears, desires and images into relation with outside others, events, history, culture, rituals, nature and socially constructed ideas. Our work as pedagogues (originally meaning “leaders of children”) resides in our abilities to invite self-in-relation in ways that activate the instability of the binary self and other. Our forms, materials and processes draw attention to how we are composed internally through on-going interactions with constantly changing images of people, events and experiences from the outside – which are themselves shaped by what we bring to the work from our inner realities –the archetypal child, for instance. van Manen (1990) writes:

Pedagogy requires a phenomenological sensitivity to lived experience. Pedagogy requires a hermeneutic ability to make interpretive sense of the life world in order to see the pedagogic significance of situations and relations of living with children. And pedagogy requires a way with language in order to allow the research process of textual reflection to contribute to one’s pedagogic thoughtfulness and tact. (p. 2)

Tact here refers to the teacher (or therapist’s) desire to take the feelings of others into consideration and to act on what is appropriate in fecund situations in order to access the life worlds of students, to hear their stories, to respect their images so that one is better able to interpret the “texts” of their lives. Recall that van Manen terms the process of re-searching the meanings of our lived experiences a “search for the fullness of living” (p. 12). This search has as its purpose “the fulfillment of our human nature: to become more fully who we are” (p. 12). Fulfillment, like the Jungian concept of individuation, is a commitment to live our lives more authentically, more wholly, more intentionally. The act of “researching-questioning-theorizing” van Manen describes as “the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become more fully a part of it, or better, to become the world” (p. 5). Here one can also read condensed stages of the alchemical process. Phenomenology calls this inseparable connection to the world “the principle of ‘intentionality’” (p. 5). In other words, it is the ways in which we make relevant and meaningful our experiences to our learning. It is through reflection on and attendance to these lived experiences that we become more fully aware of ourselves

in the world. Doing so often requires the breaking of taboos, challenging conventions and decentring habituated forms and responses. As he who mediates between the known and the unknown, Hermes is inventive and so challenges students constantly to re-cognize the images by which they construct meaning by shaping from within story, body and history. Hermes stands between the child (child as student and inner child of the adult) and the adult, between impulse and skill, between mortals and immortals. Of great significance are three aspects of Hermes that inform interpretation and teaching: He stands in liminal space; he is a trickster, knows how to seem unknowing while actually knowing; and he is a messenger, bringing words from Olympus. Here “Olympus” holds both the logos of ideas and understanding and the eros of trust, hope and love represented by Aphrodite (Lindley, 1993). With Aphrodite, whose essence is constituted through turning toward the other, the emphasis on learning becomes relational and reciprocal, not individualistic and competitive, reliant upon the feeling function and intuition whereby encounters become transposed into narratives, interwoven not dated and separate. Hermetic energy crosses boundaries and moves into their depths; Aphroditic energy dissolves them and recreates new ways of teaching and learning.

Archetypal Image ~ Aphrodite

Originally, Innana, Aphrodite and Lilith were all part of the Great Goddess who ruled over women’s sexuality and the sacred mysteries of life, death and regeneration (Reis, 2006). To understand the creative energy associated with these female figures and the maternal lineage of Hermaphrodite, it serves this exploration well to revisit the birth of Aphrodite. Within Greek mythology one sees a privileging of male power structures in the myth of genesis and the saga of Saturn. According to Reis (2006) in *Daughters of Saturn*, Aphrodite, although not swallowed like Hestia, Demeter and Hera, was also born out of this myth. In Hesiod’s version of her birth, Saturn castrated his father Ouranus and when he threw the phallus into the ocean, it exploded into foam – *aphros*. Aphrodite uses its energy to birth her self. She is the “‘other’ daughter, the daughter of otherness” (p. 29) and her appearance signals that something has been denied and forgotten. She is about “becoming [one’s] own father, becoming self-generating, capable of independent thought and action, especially in the realms of love” (Hall, 1980, p. 151). As with hermaphroditism in nature,⁴ Aphrodite becomes self-seeding; she has the capacity to self-conceive. In locating “phallic powers” *within* her (see footnote 2), the enormous amount of creative energy and freedom that arise are hers, echoing the Great Goddess who originally brought forth life without the assistance of any male god. This is the cure which she brings to her swallowed sisters and to us for the phallus (symbolic) and its powers are no longer that of another, but “they are in her and of her” (p. 254). In an alternative story of Aphrodite’s birth, Zeus

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fathered her (with Dione) so she was the sister to Hestia, Demeter and Hera. Both versions reveal the mysteries of great Aphrodite for it is she who brings both physical and spiritual renewal, and a greater dependence upon the self for empowerment, autonomy and individuation. These qualities have the capacity to rekindle education wherein we re-learn how to learn, to think imaginatively, to be spontaneously and relationally for and with ourselves, and the world. As teachers and students, we learn to develop our own creative power.

Aphrodite's task is to commit oneself in love to the sacredness of sexuality, to dynamic self-generation and the body – “to accept the body as spiritual and sexuality and erotic love as spiritual disciplines, to believe that eros is pragmatic. To honor the feminine even where it is dishonored or disadvantaged” (Metzger, 1985, p. 121). Understanding that love is a force that enhances our overall effort to be individuating, that it epistemologically grounds how we know what we know, enables both teachers and students to use such energy in the classroom in ways that invigorate discussion, excite critical imagination and manifest in action. Through her energy “we become world through love” an act that is both political and spiritual in its ramifications for “[n]othing can change as long as we devalue the feminine, denigrate the body and disbelieve in a sacred universe” (p. 123). Here that which has been falsely separated, such as mind and body, study and play, science and art, theory and practice, can be brought back into relation, re-united, alongside a way of life (*philosophia*) and a creative orientation to it (*poiesis*) – a *philopoiesis*. In connecting a mythic imagination to education such concepts and acts are brought back into relation – integrated and united – through a psychic hermaphroditic component.

As a creatrix, Aphrodite is a life force. She is “the giver of life,” “the goddess of abundant fruits” (Downing, 1999, p. 190). As goddess of love and beauty, her dark side holds an integral connection with death and loss. And while often reduced to simply a goddess of the courtesan world, what her image fully represents cannot be brought into consciousness until all the repressed aspects are acknowledged. Her beauty is not only that of the earthly beloved but also of the divine – this teaching echoes not only those of the Sacred Prostitute (Qualls Corbett, 1988) but also of Diotima, Socrates' teacher (or his anima figure) (Fidyk, 2009). Similarly, in Homer's words: “What is beautiful appears blissful in itself” (Otto, 1964, p. 101). Beauty is not merely the aesthetic aspect of appearance; it is appearance itself. Beauty thus is both an ontological and epistemological necessity – connected always to ethics: Beauty is, in Hillman's words, the way in which “the Gods touch our senses, reach the heart and attract us into life” (1983/2005, p. 45). Aphrodite's beauty is imbued with a particular kind of energy, a warmth and availability – a grace – that is at the same time receptivity and echo, harmony and consummation,

unpossessable and self-giving (Downing, 1999). Warmth and truth conjoined. That is her power, her magic. She gives events the dimension of soul: the transposition of experience into story; she is soul-making. Downing praises: “The magic of the imagination is also *your* magic” (p. 196) and, thus, her image brings the very same to our work. To overlook the beauty of the soul’s modes of expression by turning exclusively to pragmatism, empirical analysis and morality (shoulds and should nots) is to “expel soul” from the aesthetic of education and therapy (McConeghey, 2003, p. 6). Aesthetic perception seeks to redress this imbalance and return imagination and soul – and thus, beauty to our practice. It apprehends the *anima mundi* in the ordinary things and experiences of our daily lives.

It is this image of Aphrodite that welcomes the erotic into transformative and therapeutic acts: it is the presence of love – eros and the body – that are essential to learning and healing. For here we are invited to trust anew, to risk, to become vulnerable. And it is the accompanying Hermes who makes the erotic playful and curious and simultaneously escorts caution. If we can host her without being self-indulgent (for example sexual overtures or acting out), Aphrodite’s presence has the capacity to revitalize those relationships. As an educator, I have heard many pre-service teachers question the appropriateness of touch, to wonder about gay and lesbian teachers in the classroom and to be skeptical about welcoming eros into the learning environment. Fortunately, no welcoming is necessary because such energy is always already present. It does require awareness, conscious acknowledgement and a kind of courage and care to provide the conditions for it to mature, to be contained and to express. However, many often suppress, suffocate and ignore it for fear of what might happen. The pervasive concerns about touch, uncertainty, ambiguity and pleasure could be interpreted as a fear of love, and so we see the dark side of Aphrodite played out at the expense of her golden qualities. As hooks (2001) writes, “To open our hearts more fully to love’s power and grace we must dare to acknowledge how little we know of love in both theory and practice” (p. xxix). Remember, Aphrodite’s is a love that begets life, a creative energy that far transcends human sexuality, while never forgetting the body – which most systems of education continue to ignore and deny. Arising from the foam, already full-grown, she is unparented and self-sufficient, making her simultaneously both subject and object. She represents the giving, receiving and returning of love; thus, we find in her the “blending of the male and female natures in one person” (Farnell cited in Downing, 1999, p. 202). Hers is a mode of deeply embodied consciousness, a consciousness with respect to feeling, to relationship and to the valuing of both the masculine and the feminine. She teaches a way of knowing ourselves and the world that comes only through turning in love toward another, including one’s enemy both inside and outside oneself. Her task is “education in feeling” (Downing, 1999, p. 202) – a trust of feeling, an intelligence about feeling, an ability to discriminate within the realm of feeling. Such an education requires

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additionally a rehabilitation of the feeling function, a true differentiated feeling that respects other beings (vegetative, animal, human) and their different systems of values or needs, without which destructiveness results. Such feeling, informed by empathy, ushers in a poetic consciousness which unites and transforms two entities, neither to “proclaim their identity nor to establish some abstract *tertium quid*, but for the sake of the tensive bond itself” (p. 203). Within this teaching of love, lies the paradox of passion – the passion for connection, for ideas, for birthing the new; it permanently shapes us yet it is not permanent itself. These qualities point to an organic relationship between psychology and pedagogy, a *psychopedagogia*, while always underscored by philopoiesis. It is Aphrodite who gives an archetypal background to the philosophy of “eachness” and the capacity of heart to uncover an intimacy with each fecund event in a pluralistic cosmos.

Inviting the Image of Hermaphrodite into Education

Returning to myth, we read Hermaphrodite’s fate as sealed by his parentage. His father, Hermes possesses a restless, intuitive, playful yet attentive, disciplined energy. Hermes is male by sex yet feminine in spirit. His mother, Aphrodite, radiates and brings forth beauty, goodness and justice; “she is *kalokagathon*” (Hillman, 2008, p. 26) – ethics returned to aesthetics as in its original wholeness. She is female yet possesses a generative thrust, a masculine spirit. This paradoxical nature manifested in Hermaphrodite refigures the spirit and character of his parents and visually reminds us of the full range of ascribed features of the deities accessible to all of us. To illustrate, in the Greek Anthology a statue of a hermaphrodite in a bathhouse carries an inscription which begins: “To men, I am Hermes, but to women, [I] appear as [Aphrodite],” suggesting that the positive and negative, masculine and feminine, good and evil identifications are matters of personal and cultural projections (Doty, 1980/1991, p. 118). To think antithetically, which often forms the basis of mental constructs, sets up antagonisms and guards against feelings of inferiority and insecurity. These constructs act as guiding fiction and simplify or restrict the ways we apperceive the world. Hermaphrodite offers an image of variation, one of shaded differentiations where both feminine and masculine qualities overlap, interpenetrate and transmute, reflecting a reality that is not a simple either-or construct.

Hosting an androgynous image as healing for education aims to create space for re-newed pedagogical practices to be individually embodied in diverse contexts thereby rebalancing an approach to education that has and continues to privilege rationality, disembodied learning and standardized methods and content. This way of proceeding is interpretive rather than prescriptive. It urges one not to just invert, evert and reverse but also “to shift the balance this way, that way; to swerve,

disrupt, multiply; to renounce the privilege of the single unified voice/self and so to affirm and yes even unequivocally to celebrate not only what we know already of difference but all that is not yet possible to know” (Alcosser cited in Johnson, 1993, p. 237). Its goal is not to establish facts which rely on the systematic examination and comparison of things; rather, it is to interpret the “matter” relevant to the discussion through largely loose associations and synchronistic occurrences, “swinging into view sides, [symbols] and facets that are normally turned away and unseen” (de Beaugrande cited in Johnson, 1993, p. 237). These “finds” become useful because they portray the quality and dimension of a joy of learning not found in the conventional notion of teaching as the transmission of existing knowledge from an authoritative teacher to an “unknowing” student who “desires” to know. Practices that extend from such amplification are kindred to methods utilized in psychotherapy where both therapist and patient come as knowing and unknowing participants – “midwife – like”. Hermetic pedagogies or Aphrodisiacal art seeks to recover the female experience through collaborative, cooperative and interactive styles involving students in constructing and evaluating their own education. Such snaky wisdom “turn[s] everything upside down, inside out, back to front” (Irigaray cited in Johnson, 1993, 237). Administrative decisions including programming, timetabling, course load, curriculum development and implementation, in addition to professional development, curricular, pedagogic and assessment choices must also respect the feminine against the ever present danger of favouring efficiency, measurability and control which are the values currently dictating decisions in most systems of education throughout North America.

Furthermore, this image arrives via the child archetype. Consider Aphrodite’s birth from the phallus, motherless and fatherless – a child self-becoming. In a psychological sense she is androgynous for masculine and feminine attributes are conjoined in her. And Hermes – who best illustrates – when first born is a baby who feels as able as the adult, at once creative and destructive (invents the lyre by killing a turtle to string its shell). It is the equality of position in the story of Hermes stealing Apollo’s sacred cattle that illustrates the importance of a reciprocal relationship that must obtain between adult and inner child for the adult to feel the child’s energy and so to be renewed by it. Under Apollo’s fury and Zeus’ council, Hermes’ reveals where he has hidden the stolen cattle, minus two. He then sings a song for Apollo recounting the births of all the immortals, gifts him the lyre and teaches him how to play it. The song illustrates that Hermes understands the common bond that exists among all the gods, including himself and Apollo, and the gift lies in the fact that it is the child who must teach the adult. In return Apollo gives his cattle to Hermes, both swearing a bond, friendship and trust to the other. This is a bond between irrepressible childhood and adult rationality; it is a bond formed in the process of each coming to know and respect the other’s qualities. The child and the adult then are seen as equal in power even

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though different in character. Each draws energy from the other; cattle and lyre are exchanged. What starts in conflict ends in mutual support. Zeus ordered them to work the quarrel out; he did not resolve it. Likewise the process of adults/teachers finding their own inner child must be for each of us; it is not something that can be mandated from the outside or included in administrative procedures (Lindley, 1984). It is up to the pedagogue (*paidagōgós*) to look into her own life for her own child (*pais*) – both etymological roots are akin with the Greek word for “play,” *paidia*, related closely to *paideia*, learning, not in the monological sense but in creative, *apeironic*, learning. Hence, pedagogy arrives through the child, seeking to let *paidia* supplement *paideia*, thereby opening the possibility for a world of joyful learning. This world enables children to deal with knowledge even information overload by encouraging them to see that

the inner “mystery” of any discipline is not its order or coherence but its disorder, incoherence, and arbitrariness and by letting them “confront . . . the provisional, permeable character of all knowledge, the creative ‘ground’ of the formation of a discipline” and thereby develop an affirmative ease with contradiction, paradox and irony. (Johnson, 1993, p. 250)

It follows then that to deconstruct the work/play opposition for a more creative tension, thoroughly hermetic in spirit, subversively festive, “aphrodisiacal . . . in the matter of making everyday life more beautiful” (Paris, 1986, p. 18), dehierarchizes the process and creatively interanimates its voices, and turns “dialectics” into “dialogic,” thereby shifting the pedagogic project from entrenched sedimentation to that which is alive, inspired and relational.

Symbolically, Jung saw the emergence of Self reflected in the image of the child. For the pedagogue, this means that she must give up a certain amount of the adult part of herself to gain a sense of her child – so that teaching can become an extension of her real or authentic nature. Teachers must look inward as well as back in time, to reconnect with the child within. Then the child must be welcomed into the classroom, where he not only will work us but also will gift us with a feeling of enthusiasm and wonderment. Delight, in the highest sense, is what teaching can be, when the child within us pushes our students toward maturity (Lindley, 1984). Jung writes:

The child is born out of the womb of the unconscious, begotten out of the depths of human nature or rather out of living Nature herself. It is a personification of vital forces quite outside the limited range of our conscious mind; of ways and possibilities of which our one-sided conscious mind knows nothing; a wholeness which embraces the very depths of Nature. It represents

the strongest, the most ineluctable urge in every being, namely the urge to realize itself. It is, as it were, an incarnation of the inability to do otherwise, equipped with all the powers of nature and instinct, whereas the conscious mind is always getting caught up in its supposed ability to do otherwise. The urge and compulsion to self-realization is a law of nature and thus of invincible power even though its effect, at the start, is insignificant and improbable. Its power is revealed in the miraculous deeds of the child hero (CW 9i, par. 289)

The child archetype as illustrated embodies wisdom and vulnerability, as well as a compulsion towards individuation (Becker, 2004). There is a paradox, however, in the symbol of the child for it too contains aspects of one's personality that are undifferentiated, thus reminding us of our initial myth.

In what follows various theorists and practitioners from the field of education (and related disciplines such as theology and philosophy) are drawn together who speak of qualities previously described when mediating the images of Hermes and Aphrodite. They too support a call to eros, relationality and a rehabilitation of the feeling function. These characteristics: tact, love, care, freedom, eros and the erotic, play, embodiment, joy and ethics are not differentiated between Hermaphrodite's parents for they entwine into one another and become identifiable within a related hermaphroditic or androgynous pedagogy.

Tact, loco parentis, and love

Tact, a term rarely used in teacher education today, by which "we understand a special sensitivity and sensitiveness to situations and how to behave in them, for which knowledge from general principles does not suffice" (Gadamer, 1994, p. 16) – suffices to let teachers weave their theories with the reality of particular classroom situations. "The tact which functions in human sciences is not simply a feeling and unconscious, but is at the same time a mode of knowing and a mode of being" (Gadamer, 1994, p. 16). As van Manen adds, "The increasing ability to serve the good in our lives with children we might then call 'pedagogic wisdom' which actualizes itself in 'pedagogic tact'" (1990, p. 47). "Theory is immanently practical since it derives its *raison d'être* from the fact that every concrete or particular situation in which adults find themselves with children is practical, requires practical action, pedagogic tactfulness" (p. 47). Educators need to reflect on the meaning of teaching as standing *in loco parentis* to children. Acting in the role of parent (to other and self) speaks directly to the necessity of deep love and not just friendship and sacrifice in the classroom. With eros and attentiveness, the teacher recognizes the child's feelings and welcomes them to the unfolding potentialities of the child's life in relation to self, curriculum and community. If educators look on all students with a love that cares for their well being, both

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pedagogical and human, that would dispose them to thoughtfulness and tact. This approach stands in direct contrast to traditional theories of pedagogy which implicitly assume the existence of a substantial, fixed and absolute body of knowledge which can be mastered by the student regardless. When knowledge is conceived as an absolute category, teaching can only be indoctrination. There is no discursive space where the child can exist or new knowledge may emerge or be created. Here we see two contrasting images of teacher. The first is a shaper of students through the traditional methods of forming students through pre-determined knowledge; the second “a shape-shifter who challenges students constantly to re(-)cognize the images by which they construct (and thereby close or open) their selves/worlds” (Johnson, 1993, p. 227).

Grumet (1988) likewise compares the “look” in pedagogy to the “look” in parenting. The parental look, from its early misunderstanding to the changing asymmetries of attachment, from its objectifications to the reclamation of subjectivity through mastery of sign and language, provide “essential phases in the dialogue between teacher and student that we call pedagogy” (p. 106). To Buber (1965) the apprenticeship exemplifies a pedagogical relationship that is, like parenting, engaged with the material world. In the contemporary pedagogue’s relation to a student, education is “lifted out of the purposefully streaming by of all things and is marked off as purpose” (p. 89). The world for the first time becomes the “true subject of its effect” (p. 89).

Care, love and relationality

Such relations need what Noddings (1984) calls care, where both the child and the teacher contribute to the relation: “my caring must be somehow completed in the other if the relation is to be described as caring” (p. 4). This notion of completion (although always incomplete) speaks to the I-Thou relationship which is marked by how one relates to the other. According to Buber (1970) a human being is transfigured into authentic life only by entering an I-Thou relationship, thus confirming the otherness of the other. This relationship, unlike the I-It relationship, demands total commitment. The I-Thou encounter dissolves the egocentric boundaries of the individual where the I and Thou are “transparent to each other” in a trusting understanding that transcends the words of rational mastery with which we manipulate the world of I-It contingencies (Weigert, 1970, pp. 32-33). This encounter echoes Jung’s idea of wholeness and inter-relationality that becomes through a ‘combination of I and You’ as illustrated in an alchemical marriage. Bateson (1989) further describes the way caring enters into and transmutes activities as a “curious alchemy” and adds that at its best it creates freedom (p. 157). In Western society, we habitually underestimate the impulse to

care for one another and the need to be taken care of. In a multiplicity of forms, Bateson says, “caretaking is part of the composition of almost every life” (p. 140). For Noddings (1984, 1992), like Buber, caring, love and relation play central roles in both ethics and moral education. She suggests that caring is the element required in all “successful” education and that contemporary schooling can be revitalized in its light.

Love, eros and the erotic

Keen (1992) in *The Passionate Life* defines the stages of loving that contribute to our unfolding. He contends that love, sexuality and power can only be healed by returning to the original meaning of eros, by seeing the pleasures of the flesh within the context of the human promise. Our erotic dis-ease will be cured when we become “cosmopolitan lovers,” that is, when *potentia* (power) and eros (desire) reunite our bodies to the *polis* (the body politic) and the *cosmos* (the world). In other words, Keen’s understanding fits with the interpretations drawn from Jungian thought where an internal cultivation or an alchemical process is required within us to shape and direct our external relations and learning.

Teaching and learning have been named “the process of wooing and being wooed” by the subject, engagement with it and the teacher herself (Keroes, 1999, p. ix). “The erotic,” Keroes argues, “always involves an instinct toward and a longing for connection that goes beyond a desire for mere sexual gratification” and which are involved in the erotic pleasures of the teaching and learning exchange (p. 15). McWilliam (1995) calls pedagogy an “erotic field” in which “successful teachers appropriately mobilize forces of desire (the desire to teach, the desire to learn) both of which are productive in ways which are not merely malevolent” (p. 15). She also insists on the separation of the erotic not from the body but from the explicitly sexual. This understanding is central to the parameters between eros in the classroom and sexual harassment that in no way eroticizes knowledge. Keen urges us to remember that in its earliest conception “erotic potency was not confined to sexual power but included the moving force that propelled every life-form from a state of mere potentiality to actuality” (1992, p. 5). The erotic in this conception supports the desire “to acknowledge passion for the power of learning, our delight in flirtatiousness of intellectual debate” (Kirby, 1994, p. 19). Further we are reminded of the themes of depth psychology – hermetic secrets and hermeneutics infused with erotic imagination. Here the art and study of words, language, poetry, music, even astronomy and rhetoric come to mind. Knowledge, not in terms of order and mastery, but in terms of chance and invention – wherein “concepts and logics of fuzziness, complexity, and polyvalence querying and (re)constructing that world” – are valued (Johnson, 1993, p. 229). Here through erotic power students learn the critical-mindedness of an “in-determinate subject” engaged in the creation rather than consumption of knowledge, a pedagogy that provides an opportunity to

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debate meanings and values and “at once demystifies the hermeneutic process and puts the *student* into the position of the subject who is supposed to know” – rather than into that of the unknown (p. 230). Teaching in this way rings of trickster wisdom, reminding one that Hermes must be near.

By extension, Lorde (1984) challenges us to open further to Aphroditic energy where the pleasures of the erotic can operate in every aspect of our lives, “whether it is dancing, building a bookcase, writing a poem, examining an idea” (p. 57). She argues, “we are taught to separate the erotic demand from most vital areas of our life other than sex,” but for her:

The erotic functions . . . in several ways. The first is in providing the power which comes from sharing deeply any pursuit with another person. The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference. (p. 56)

Erotics is fertile, creative of new relations, new knowledge, new perspectives. Given that critically engaged pedagogy seeks to transform consciousness, to enable students to know themselves better and to live in the world more fully, to some extent it must rely on the presence of care, eros, indeed, the erotic and playful to aid the learning process. Understanding that love is a force that enhances our overall effort to be individuated enables both teachers and students to use such energy in the classroom in ways that invigorate discussion, excite imagination, and manifest in action. As hooks (1994) suggests, bringing passion (knowledge that unites theory and practice) and a love for ideas can make the classroom a dynamic place that transforms social relations and erases its false separation from the world. Here the child and the adult are both sources of energy for teaching. Not the child as student but the child in the teacher and the teacher in the student. Teaching demands the energy and playfulness of the child within us. It follows, “that renewal begins when we reconnect with our own inner child” (Lindley, 1984, p. 38). In this example, eros does not lead to the death of individuality, but creates richer possibilities for individuality and psychic wholeness to flourish while acknowledging its connected presence.

Embodiment, joy and ethics

hooks argues that traditionally the body has been erased from the public world of institutional learning. She says that “to call attention to the body is to betray the legacy of repression and denial that has been handed down to us by our professorial elders” who inherited it from the scientific paradigm (1994, p. 191). Provocatively she asks, “What did one do with the body in the classroom?” (p. 192). One must

agree; the body “is integral to its identity” (Eagleton, 1996, p. 69). Usually entering the classroom calls for the mind only – the body is erased, forgotten. However, with a shift to pedagogy that subverts the mind-body split, we learn to enter the classroom “whole.” We bring all that we are. The body is where we as educators must seek “to recover embodied knowing for it is in the body that an education for ethical existence can be rooted” (Shapiro, 2003, p. 3). Farley (1996), echoing the earlier amplification of Aphrodite, continues: this ethical dimension is housed in eros. Eros or the erotic, she says, is “first of all a capacity for joy, which connects us to others” (p. 68). It is the body that has the power to feel compassion, to act upon ethical responsibility. Further:

eros does not only imply a feeling, but a co-feeling, a consent, not only being conscious of the passion of the world, but having compassion. . . . Everything that is tied to eros must see with fantasy, with creativity, bursting forth toward the new, the surprising, the wonderful. (Boff, 1984, pp. 11-12)

For a transformational and potentially healing education, we must attend to the realm of the felt, the sensual and the relational. This means that pedagogically we need to begin with the body – the body understood as the material, fleshy “stuff” – inscribed by cultural values, attitudes and beliefs, and the way out of our limited social identities (Shapiro, 2003, p. 4). Recalling the entwined bodies of Hermaphrodite and Salmacis, Farley’s elaborates:

By connecting us to others functions as a profound teacher; it allows us to draw near others in ways that do not harm them. This non-dominating proximity permits an understanding of others to emerge that would otherwise not be possible. Rooted in joy, the erotic empowers human beings for the work of world-transformation. The joy of Eros is deeply ethical in quality and effect. It is through Eros, which is drawn out of itself by the wonder of existence, that orientation toward reality becomes possible. (1996, p. 69)

In the context of curriculum development, Edgerton (1995) adds:

love has been appropriated (made kitsch) repeatedly such that one is afraid to use the term – especially in theoretical works. I intend to reclaim it. It is about power. If it were not about power, it would not be so often stolen. Love is also about power that is dynamic rather than static and asymmetrical. Love reformulates the curriculum question, “what knowledge is of most worth?” to “what knowledge best enables us to care for ourselves, one another, and the non-human world?” (p. 9)

To Socrates, Diotima similarly offers eros as a dynamic energy that plays between emotional extremes, yet is not emotion itself. Jung likewise names affect

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and emotion as “hallmarks of undifferentiated feeling” and stresses “when [feeling] is differentiated, it is not emotional at all” (von Franz, 2008, p. 16); thus, “this new form of love, a whole-making effect of a certain kind of Eros” is clearly not an emotive, driven love (p. 16). Love “is a dynamism which needs form and direction” (Jung cited in von Franz, 2008, p. 17). Further, von Franz, offers guiding wisdom to every teacher: “a differentiated feeling relationship would include a deep empathy and closeness to the other *and* a certain distance . . . an understanding and a non-understanding, the latter consisting of a silent respect of the mystery of the other’s individuality” (p. 17). Such love is symbolized in alchemy by the “strange image of a rosy-colored blood” that emanates from the Philosopher’s Stone (*homo putissimus*, lapis) and heals all people (Jung, CW 13, par. 389–390).

Alchemy & Education

Borrowing from the alchemical process that is part of the therapeutic encounter, we see that transference experiences acknowledge the importance of care and bonding with and separating from parental figures, therapists or teachers and are concerned with the inner process of transformation by envisaging life as a continued process of development. Thus the projections of clients onto the therapist, or students onto the teacher, and vice versa reflect something of their own inner psychic world. One of the gifts that alchemy has given to psychotherapy is its understanding of the process of transformation. It is applicable in one sense to the simple process of undergoing a change in the way one sees the world and in another it provides vital background knowledge to understanding the process of psychological transformation.

From a psychological standpoint the stage of nigredo, for example, is experienced as entering a dark and chaotic unconscious inner world. At first nothing makes sense, indeed the best response of a therapist is to be fully present and to empathize with the client, who in the process of articulating his or her experience, facilitates it further. The therapeutic setting becomes a hermetically sealed vessel and the inner chaos that the client enters into is symbolized by the reactions of opposing forces struggling against each other. During many years of teaching high school, I witnessed the turbulence and dark days of many teens, and our collective classroom ethos built on trust and care held the experience of the inner worlds of students which inevitably intensified where anger, fear, frustration even a desire to escape was experienced. To hold such fire or destructive energy took patience, humility and acceptance not only on behalf of the student in turmoil but also of other classmates and me who through my own experiences knew that a process of purification was in progress and that with time the inner conflicts would be resolved and a new inner state of clarity and freedom would arise. Many

teachers today are reluctant to challenge or disrupt students' beliefs or assumptions; teachers too often resist any kind of relevant and meaningful discussion where students might share their emotions or feelings for fear of not being prepared to "control" what might happen or by an unwillingness to move away from prescribed curricula where students lives are often not reflected. By returning a wider range of experiences and feeling to the classroom (respected as a sacred container), by giving primacy of humanness over the technical in such situations, by welcoming life in its diverse even turbulent manifestations, healing and transformation may be possible among students, teachers and community members. Remember Hermes is not only the receptacle of such raw material, he is the symbol for it and thus is the agent of transformation. Psychologically seen, he represents the "agency of consciousness" which, as it comes into being, increases our awareness of our own potentials for discriminating and evaluating. It also "prepares the way for the reformation of the matter-substance-idea" (Singer, 1976/2000, p. 100).

Relating the image of Hermaphrodite and Salmacis entwined in water to education offers a warning to the fused state inherent in the kind of teaching whereby the student is kept dependent on the adult through ways of learning that do not encourage her to think and respond imaginatively from her own interests and particulars of life, ways that reflect her developing personality (her inner world) and set her apart from the teacher. Education that elicits predictable responses as characterized in comprehension testing, best practices and rote lessons, keeps the learner tied to knowledge by transmission, and tied to the "parent". Such "knowledge" is already predetermined and controlled by institutions of learning and enforced by the teacher and textbook rather than fostering an independence of critical and creative thought and action that would lead her into the world through her own curiosity, relationships and creative application of ideas. Here the child is not only open to actual experience, but also to the numinous, the transpersonal – matters of life, death, eternity (Lindley, 1984). Pedagogically, the related hermaphroditic being signals an ongoing incorporation of art, imagination and body through play, risk and active inquiry, alongside the prescriptive, technical and abstract, across all disciplines as a way of acquiring and representing skills and knowledge. Such lesson planning holds curriculum-as-planned with curriculum-as-lived in dynamic tension and shapes types of assessment to include narrative response, self and peer assessment, portfolios and work read for process not only content, to name only a few.

Healing and Transformation

Addressing the initial question: "What healing and transformation might these image-makers bring to education?" emphasizes the autonomous quality inherent in what a myth sets in motion as much as what a myth can do. Recall the curse of fusion and its curative potential. The myth of Hermaphrodite provides a very

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distinct image of union. To some the narrative image is grotesque and unnatural, to others it is promising for it is not understood literally but as a third image that marks the beginning of a movement toward wholeness.

Archetypal images, like myths and symbols, beckon us. They ask something of us, both subjectively and objectively, individually and collectively, particularly when we understand that the human psyche is a matrix for the experience of gods and goddesses. Jung suggests:

All ages before us have believed in gods in some form or other. Only an unparalleled impoverishment of symbolism could enable us to rediscover the gods as psychic factors, that is, as archetypes of the unconscious. . . . All this would be quite superfluous in an age of culture that possessed symbols. (CW 9i, par. 50)

The images of Hermes and Aphrodite are significant to pedagogy and psychotherapy alike – simply, our well-being depends on movement, depth, creativity and love – an intentional tacking back and forth between the inner and outer, the unknown and known, a process by feeling, not thought-alone. Not to heed the opportunity to mediate the image of Hermaphrodite would be to miss the profundity of that mystery which courses through us and animates the world. This tracking is not identification with the god and goddess but rather a dialogue with them. That is, the task of the ego is to converse with the energy that the god/goddess-image incarnates – to be responsive, to enter into a conversation, but not to abandon its standpoint. It is to engage our imaginations and wildness in a playful yet serious consideration of the images that call our attention so that one may integrate their particular characteristics.

To speak of education as transformative and therapeutic may be an affront to some; however, education stems from *educare*, to lead forth, to draw from within, which returns us to the pedagogue, the servant who was entrusted to guide the child by drawing out what was already in him. Recall that pedagogy requires a hermeneutic ability; it requires an interpretive sense of the world, a way with language – that wild system of symbols and sounds, and a process that returns our work to the world through feeling, relatedness and love. What continues to drive education is an over-reliance on the external, the masculine, the measurable – public scores, budget cuts, global competition and legislation driven by political and corporate agendas. Indeed education in general, and teacher education in particular, is still dominated by an eighteenth-century ideal: “that reason ultimately defeats whatever stands in its way. Truth is equated with logic. And ‘reason’ is understood as the property of the dominant culture” (Lindley, 1993, p. 95). Part of the process of embracing this new hermaphroditic or androgynous consciousness involves conjoining with the feminine and recognizing that in much of what we call

education, she has been repressed and denied. The feminine here entails a liquidity that draws simultaneously from the past, the current particulars and from an image imbued with creativity and eros. For the greater depth of the feminine to be approached, it cannot be done with a patriarchal attitude alone, an attitude that focuses on outcomes, rationality and bottom lines.

In turning to the image of Hermaphrodite, we see a potential curative. The healing that awaits us in our schools and in our engagement with the world calls for a new way approach and ethic arising from a new story from within a familiar history, indeed new values – not only a return of the feminine but also a masculine that is actively engaged. Teachers, pedagogues need to focus on the dynamic interchange of images, ideas, thoughts, emotions and feelings that go on continuously in the open system to which we belong. The key to the new consciousness is the capacity to feel oneself at home in the process, like Hermes “at home on the road” or Aphrodite’s ability to self-seed. To be androgynous is to see oneself no longer as exclusively masculine or exclusively feminine but rather as a whole being in whom the opposite qualities are ever-present – the same is true of our classrooms. Singer (1976/2000) writes it thus:

In an open system approach people are regarded as total organisms – each one of unique quality – and individuals are seen as process factors, generating the energy by means of which society evolves. (p. 199)

In education, then, both healing and transformation can be accessed through the energy available to us through mythological images. Students and teachers alike would have a wider purview of self-conception and greater access to the necessary self-generating power by becoming aware of the paradoxical nature of individuation wherein one develops both a subjective and objective relationship with Self. To draw from images as a way of becoming yet not identifying with them, empowers the individual and allows for access to that kalokagathon of qualities known to the deities. What is capable, then, of uniting the real and the imaginary and “which itself transcends time and conflict, neither adhering to nor partaking of one side or the other but somehow common to both and offering the possibility of a new synthesis” is metaphorically symbolized in the image of Hermaphrodite (Samuels et al cited in Tannen, 2007, p. 140).

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Notes

¹ Borrowing from June Singer (1976), I use androgyny to refer to an overriding principle to our notions of masculine and feminine characteristics. She suggests that androgyny can liberate the individual from the confines of the "appropriate" as in gender roles and expectations. The androgyny will be discovered by turning inward into ourselves. It is a subtle body buried in the deep unconscious realm that all humans collectively share. It is a state of consciousness far from ordinary and threatens many people's state of equilibrium. It also threatens many presuppositions about individuals' identity as men or as women (pp. 8-9).

² To some this stone marker was a phallic monument but this transition seems to have happened later when he was consciously moved from the countryside to the polis, turning in his youthful, dynamic and air-like qualities for an older, bearded man. The phallus on the Hermes' monument is an image of instinct, not sexual but the instinct of creativity. Hermes is

not primarily a fertility god. The phallus on his statue is not a signifier of male procreativity and sexual prowess. Brown (1969) associates the phallus with Hermes as magician:

The phallus is so closely identified with magic in Roman religion that the word *fascinum*, meaning enchantment, witchcraft (cf. fascinate) is one of the standard Latin terms for the phallus; no better evidence could be found for the appropriateness of the emblem for Hermes as magician. When Greek craftsman hung images of ithyphallic demons over their workshops, it is clear that to them the phallus symbolized not fertility but magic skill at craftsmanship. (p. 37)

Murray Stein (2000) agrees with Brown's placement of the accent on creativity –“the Creative itself as *fascinosum*”– rather than on magic, although the two can easily be associated (p. 5). He says that creative people are often especially potent and magical and, further, their talents can be “awesome and numinous. Creativity is magical, of the self and not of the ego” (p. 5).

³ *Alchemical Studies* describes his paradoxical nature (two-headedness):

By the philosophers I am named Mercurius; my spouse is the [philosophic] gold; I am the old dragon found everywhere on the globe of the earth, father and mother, young and old, very strong and very weak, death and resurrection, visible and invisible, hard and soft; I descend into the earth and ascend to the heavens, I am the highest and the lowest, the lightest and the heaviest; . . . I am dark and light; I come forth from heaven and earth; I am known and yet do not exist at all; by virtue of the sun's rays all colors shine in me, and all metals. I am the carbuncle of the sun, the most noble purified earth, through which you may change copper, iron, tin and lead into gold.” (cited in CW 13, par. 267)

⁴ In nature many taxonomic groups even flora do not have separate sexes. Hermaphroditism is a “normal” state and enables a form of sexual reproduction in which both partners can act as a “male” or “female” (snails and worms). In the human population, while statistics vary widely on the occurrence of hermaphroditism, numbers are reported from as frequent as one in a thousand births to one percent of the population. Such individuals may be killed or venerated depending upon into which society they are born. Variation is persistent in nature; it is not simply a binary system but rather a more complex and differentiated one. Thus, in using *bi-*ness it is a term not to indicate a simple either-or split; rather, it signifies a natural variant that continuously morphs aspects of two key elements – the masculine and the feminine. In this way, nature has its own imaginative biological becoming which human beings seek psychologically.