



Canberra Jung Society

Newsletter

July 2020

Canberra Jung Society Incorporated

ABN 94 001 504 465

The Canberra Jung Society is a non-profit organisation which aims to provide a contact for people interested in the psychological insights of Carl Gustav Jung. Through monthly meetings, workshops, other activities and our library, we seek to help people to understand their own inner journey and the world today — from a Jungian perspective.

Membership

Membership is open to all who are interested in the work of Carl Jung. Membership entitles you to:

- Free admission to monthly Friday night lectures
- Discounts to workshops run by the Society
- Copies of the Society's bi-annual Journal.

Annual membership fees

- Single membership \$75
- Concessional membership \$60
(seniors, full-time students, pensioners)

Other charges

Newsletter subscription for non-members \$16
(bi-annual publication)

Non-members entrance to Friday night lectures

- Single entry \$15
- Seniors card entry \$10
- Pension/student cards \$10

Meetings

Friday night lectures starting at 8pm are usually held on the first Friday of the month from February to November. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these lectures are conducted online via ZOOM. When we can meet again face-to-face, we will gather at MacKillop House Conference Centre 50 Archibald Street, Lyneham. Details of lectures and meeting places are on the Society's website.

Workshops

Workshops are sometimes held on Saturdays. Individual announcement for each workshop is made on the Society's website and in the monthly Bulletin.

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www.canberrajungsociety.org.au

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Canberra Jung Society Newsletter. July 2020

President's report

Hello and welcome to another edition of the Canberra Jung Society newsletter!

Thank you everyone, for taking the trouble for coming along to our meetings in February, March and our special zoom sessions in April, May and June. We have had to become computer-enabled very quickly and get our heads around the requirements of the 21st Century!

One advantage of the on-line meeting format is that it allows engagement with some people who would otherwise not be at our face-to-face gathering. We have had participation of people interstate and overseas, and some who are not able to come out at that time.

I hope you have survived the shut-down lifestyle that we have endured in the last couple of months. Some people have become very busy with a lot of creative tasks happening, and others wonder when they can get down to their favourite coffee and cake shop without having to stand in a queue and wait for seating to become available.

I would like to personally thank our amazing committee that are working hard to keep the Jung Society going in difficult times!

Our presenters, who have as usual risen to the occasion of going the extra mile of giving us amazing lectures and discussions, but unfortunately due to COVID-19 we have missed out on the library access, lovely music and yummy supers!

Looking forward to seeing everyone in person soon!

Please enjoy our events in the next half of the year.

Best wishes

Jeanne James



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Exploring the Symbolic Elements of Music and their links to Consciousness

Dr Kirstin Robertson-Gillam PhD

This essay is an enquiry into the nature of music and consciousness. The argument as to whether consciousness is an individual perception as part of the mind or whether it is outside the individual, as part of the collective unconscious, is a matter for ongoing discussion. According to some authors, consciousness consists of the elements of time, knowledge and language. Energy and information flow are also aspects of consciousness which need to be accessed. The elements of music such as time, rhythm, melody, harmony and musical intervals are all devices whereby a person can gain access to their Higher Selves and progress quickly along the path of transformation and wholeness. This would be the most ideal outcome of our discussion; to work on ourselves and to create a happier and more coherent world in which we all grow and thrive.

From a Jungian perspective, music was not given a lot of emphasis in its theories and methods. Jung was not a musician himself but had a very deep respect for its effects on the psyche. He wrote: “music expresses the movement of feelings that cling to unconscious processes”. In Jung’s well-known conversation with American music therapist, Margaret Tilley in 1956 he explained that music has such depths that affect the human psyche, that he could never do it justice, not being a musician himself. He also expressed the idea that “musicians don’t realize the depth of archetypal material that music is dealing with” (Tilly, 1977). Jung referred to his auditory synchronicities as “breaking into his realm of perception, chalking them up to psychic contents emerging through acoustic means” (Jaffé, 1961, p.23).



At the same time that Jung was writing, working and teaching, Rudolph Steiner was developing his own educational spiritual movement which expressed the idea that music is deeply connected to feelings and spirituality. He believed that this was of utmost importance to the evolution of the human soul.

Music with all its elements can connect humans to the depths of the “flowing cosmic ocean” of the spiritual world (Steiner, 1983). Rudolph Steiner had such a deep respect for the power of music that he incorporated it into his educational and spiritual movement which was an outgrowth of theosophy, called ‘Anthroposophy’. Steiner believed that “music is the only art form whose archetypal origins lie in the spiritual rather than physical realms. Music therefore, is a messenger from the spiritual world, speaking to us through tones...” (Steiner, 1983, p.vii).

Dr Kirstin Robertson-Gillam is a Registered Music Therapist and Registered Nurse with a PhD in Music Therapy. She also holds Masters degrees in counselling and research methods. She has held a variety of therapeutic positions in hospitals, and with Dementia Australia and Parkinson’s Australia. She is currently the Clinical Director of Creative Horizons Healthcare providing counselling services across Australia by phone and online. Kirstin has a long-time association with the Steiner Movement including working at the Inala Rudolf Steiner School for Curative Education in Cherrybrook, Sydney.



In my work as a music therapist over the past forty years, I have profoundly experienced this power. I found that music can tap into the human soul and awaken powers and abilities in the disabled, intellectually impaired, mentally unwell, elderly and dying and dying, as well as birth and new life. As each person before me opened up their consciousness in myriads of ways, I found myself asking deep questions: What is consciousness? What is existence? What constitutes meaning and purpose in life? These questions have continued to inform my therapeutic practice throughout my professional careers: First as a registered nurse and midwife delivering babies, saving lives and midwifing people into death. Second as a music therapist reaching across the divide of consciousness and delving into the depths of a person's soul with the melodies, structures, dynamics, tempos and rhythms of music. Third, as a psychotherapist and counsellor, listening to and offering multi-dimensional therapeutic programs for people to help them develop strategies for living their lives in happier and less chaotic ways. And fourth, as an academic, teaching and serving the next generation of music therapists.

What is Consciousness?

In the 1980s, as a student of ethnomusicology, I had to carry out field work so I decided to study the Japanese Shakuhachi flute. It was in the mid-1980s and my consciousness was awakened and developing. I eagerly drank at the well of knowledge that this course of study offered me. I decided that in order to be an effective music therapist, I needed to understand the nature of music from cultural, social, spiritual, religious, emotional and psychological perspectives and this required me to study the music of all human cultures around the world.

In my Japanese music subject, I had to carry out field work so I visited Sydney University and recorded the performance by a Master of the Japanese Shakuhachi flute tradition, then touring Australia. I sat in the front row, proudly waiting for the moment when the flautist began, with my tape recorder ready to go. As the performer picked up his flute, I was suddenly and unexpectedly transported to another realm of consciousness. My whole body was tingling and my

awareness was riveted on the magical sound that came from this amazing musician and his flute! I had never experienced anything like it! What was this music that could spontaneously induce this response in me?



Shakuhachi player

Many years later, I was driving through busy Sydney traffic playing a tape of Rhapsody in Blue by Gershwin and unexpectedly found myself in a realm that expressed layers and layers of different shades of blue in which I was floating! This imagery transported me along until the music finished and I arrived safely at my destination. I have never forgotten this experience. What was it that induced these responses in me?

According to academic microbiologist, biochemist and recognized authority on the origin of life, Darryl Reaney (1991), the word 'consciousness' seems to have "slippery qualities". It can be confused with such words as mind, awareness, intelligence or cognitive faculty. And yet, "while many people say they know what consciousness is, when asked to explain they run into all sorts of verbal ambiguities and logical inconsistencies" (Reaney, 1991).

Does consciousness only exist in the mind? Are consciousness and the mind one and the same? According to academic neuropsychiatrist, Dan Siegel (2017, p.13), "the mind has its own features and characteristics including *consciousness*, thought and emotion. He sees the mind as a "social and neural function" of the body even though it is not a physical structure. Many academics believe that the mind is generated by the brain. If that is true, the brain also generates consciousness as part of the mind. In fact, Siegel believes that the brain, relationships and mind are three aspects of one reality which consist of energy

and information flow; the “triangle of human experience” and that “the mind is a part of a complex system containing the fundamental elements of energy and information flow that is shared, embodied and regulated”.

On the other hand, Reaney (1991), explored consciousness in terms of levels of awareness, knowingness and time. He asked: “Do we identify consciousness with the mental reaction we experience from the incoming information received by the senses? Is the act of seeing an act of integration and is that integrative act of consciousness, an act of knowing?” (1991, p.181).

How do we ‘know’ when we are conscious of ourselves in one moment in time? Reaney suggests that “our minds create this present moment in time from our memories. The mind orders its sensory input to make a coherent picture that we can understand about our reality. We learn by what we see. We measure an object by the shadows cast by its edges and compute the distance by the perspective-structured relationship between the objects. Then our brain, puts all of these computations together so that we understand what we are seeing. The fundamental act of seeing is an act of integration and the integrative act of consciousness is the act of knowing” (1991, p.83).

Reaney points out that part of the problem with any definition of consciousness is “our reluctance to recognize that consciousness is more like a progressive scale of different degrees of awareness which forms a continuum in *time* that fractures into a graduated sequence of stable states; a coherent quality of knowing” (Reaney, 1991, p.181). So, consciousness is connected to *time* which is a locally experienced phenomenon of living in this 3D reality we call life.

According to Steiner (1983), language becomes the important instrument through which knowledge, awareness and transformation can be attained. We know the world that we live in through *time*. Everything we think and do is time-bound. Our clocks keep track of the movement of time. We say that ‘time passes’ and, as we grow older, we begin to feel that time is ‘running out’. Reaney believes that the origin of this sense of

time passing is tied up with the origin of language and, as Steiner (1983) pointed out, language is acquired over time so that knowledge is gained and awareness raised.

We strive to make sense of our world. We have a drive to put meaning and purpose into everyday life. We make future plans and look back at past achievements or failures. We all have the ability to structure our thoughts in time. In fact, our whole reality is time-bound, particularly if we relate our states of mind to time. However, our sense of the serial passing of time, which we all take for granted as part of the ‘*real*’ world, is very much a construction of our own minds (Reaney 1994, p.80). Your self-consciousness of this moment is *your* knowing of it. You integrate this input of experience to make sense of your world, because each one of us experiences the world from our own perspective which is generated by our minds.

When we remember ourselves from many years ago, that moment is still there. In that sense, the whole of your life still exists, even after death! In fact, as Reaney says, “If we are the songlines of our lives and if songlines know reality through resonance, we must remain conscious even after death” (1994, p.94). Furthermore, matter doesn’t die. It becomes transformed into something else. Nothing in nature is ever wasted.

***Knowing unites in eternity
what matter creates in time.***

(Reaney, 1994, p.43).

Deep consciousness is *knowing* stretched out along the dimension of *time* (Reaney, 1991). Reaney (1994, p.93) offered the opinion that “knowing is the organized software of consciousness itself”. Jung called this phenomenon the “collective unconscious” or the “collective *knowing* of the human species”. It is the imaginal realm of reality – the source of symbols, archetypes and stories ... The *knowing* that integrates them into myths, theories, epics, poems, works of art, music compositions, requires *language* and understanding to put them all together. So, unless we link these items of knowing to the imaginal field, we are left with a soup of unconnected ideas (Reaney, 1994).

Reaney (1994) suggested that the “music of knowing” is likened to the songlines that our indigenous people call “The Dreaming”. Their songlines are a map of their land in which they live. Through the songlines, they connect to their eternal existence and connection to the land. Perhaps we could also embrace this idea that we are the songlines of our lives and become conscious of our eternal existence! However, if our own personal songline is out of tune with the “chorus of creation”, it is unable to connect as part of the uni-verse; “the one song, the music that makes the world” (p.94). Accordingly, “the waveform of knowing is critical to survival”. It is only through ‘the wave form of knowing’ that the individual wave patterns of songlines can become harmonic and stabilize into standing waves, which last rather than the kind of static discordant and disruptive individual ego songline (Reaney, 1994, p.125).

What is Music?

According to Kroeker (2019): “Music is a waking dream”. It is “music that is energy received, frequency perceived and vibration felt. It is infinitely more than the sum of its parts. Music is culturally, socially and spiritually based. It exists in some form in every culture of the world. All the world religions use music to support their ideologies. Music is psychologically oriented. The “psyche is fundamentally musical within its dynamic interchange of tension and release and by investigating any of the varying and kaleidoscopic elements within the sphere of music, it soon becomes clear that we are listening to our own auditory reflection” (Kroeker, 2019). Music is also structurally time-bound within its rhythms, shapes, resonance and movements. Its elements and devices involve the building blocks that structure the form and shapes of musical melodies such as repetitive phrases and motifs, harmony, pitch, tone, major and minor keys, modes, intervals of sound within scale structures and dynamics; loud and soft, legato and staccato; producing tension-release that speaks to the emotions of the heart.



Research on how music activates the whole brain

We are what we hear.

(Kroeker, 2019, p.66)

“Knowing is a kind of meta-reality – a reality behind reality: a kind of self-standing wave. It lives outside the world of matter as a timeless music that underpins the melodic structure of the one song, the uni-verse, the harmonic summation of all that is” (Reaney, 1994).

In music, humans feel the echoes of the element of feeling that lies outside time but weaves and lives inside the innermost core of things. Feelings are the innermost elements of the soul, akin to the spiritual world, because in tone the soul finds the element in which it actually moves. The archetype of music is in the spiritual. When we hear music, we experience the world of our spiritual home (Steiner, 1983). Schopenhauer once said “that in music, man perceives the heartbeat of the will of the world” (Quoted in Steiner, 1983).

Some neuroscientific research has brought forth data on how powerfully music impacts and influences the brain; how it responds and processes environmental events through its symbolism, its patterns, shapes and structures. For instance, Särkämö et al., in 2008 were surprised to discover that music activates the whole brain at once; i.e., wide-spread bilateral networks that govern attention, semantic processing, memory, motor functions, emotional processing, emotional regulation and cognitive functioning. We know without question that music is good for the brain!

The hippocampus, located in the mid-brain, plays a pivotal role in the generation of positive emotions (Koelsch et al., 2010). Researchers Warner-Schmidt and Duman (2006) discovered that clinically depressed individuals demonstrate reduced volume in hippocampal formation, creating difficulties for expressing positive emotions in clinically depressed people. Music therapy was found to be effective in re-balancing the volume of hippocampal formation, enabling the generation of positive emotions.

Nordic researchers Erkkilä et al.. in 2011 used recorded music and tested participants before and after music

sessions using quantitative EEG. They found that active participation in music therapy assists emotional regulation showing alpha and theta changes in fronto-temporal brain structures for major depressive disorder (MDD) and generalised anxiety disorder (GAD).

Additionally, a few years later, the same researchers found that improvisational psychodynamic music therapy activates anterior fronto-temporal activity in Rest-EEG when they were tested before and after music therapy sessions, thereby reducing MDD symptoms (Fachner, Gold & Erkkilä, 2013). These studies validate the use of music for dealing with trauma.

Musical elements and symbols that link music to consciousness

Steiner (1983) wrote about the 'inner nature of music and the experience of tone in a series of essays and lectures in 1906, outlining why music has always held a special position among the expressive arts. He believed that music is the only art form whose archetypal origin lies in the spiritual rather than the physical world when compared to architecture, sculpture or painting". Steiner postulated that "the creative musician translates what he has experienced in the spiritual world in harmonies, melodies and rhythms that manifest in the physical world" (Steiner, 1983: vii). Steiner believed that the evolution of the human race has been profoundly influenced by musical intervals (over centuries) which have acted as 'devices' to lift humans outside of matter and into cosmic-spiritual experiences.

Steiner believed that musical tone is directly related to the "very heart of nature". He asserted that a composer draws 'motifs' (another musical device) out of the musical creations of his/her soul, thereby awakening

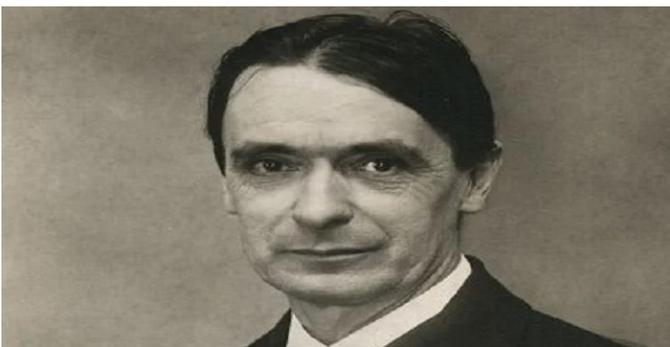
higher faculties which can be developed through meditation and concentration (and music). These devices can develop the human soul, step by step, transforming one's perception of life.

Steiner believed that our physical bodies are surrounded by the non-physical energies of spiritual bodies such as the etheric and astral bodies. Human evolution is dependent on the transformation of these different bodies. "When man (woman) lives and weaves in the world of flowing tones, he/she is saturated by these tones...man/woman feels the echoes of the element that weaves and lives in the innermost core of things (through music) and because feelings are the innermost elements of the soul ... the archetype of music is in the spiritual" (Steiner, 1983, p.9).

The composer and philosopher, Arnold Schopenhauer (cited in Steiner, 1983) believed that "music stands on a higher level than all the other arts....The melodies and harmonies of tones in music are nature's direct expression; ... the will that flows through the world... expressed in tones".

Steiner hypothesised that we have three states of consciousness. First, the most familiar state, he called "waking day-consciousness", i.e. beta brain state. Second, another familiar state he called "dream-filled sleep", i.e., alpha brain state, "presents simple daily experiences to man/woman in symbols. The third state of consciousness is dreamless sleep, a state of a certain emptiness for the ordinary human being"; theta and delta brain states (Steiner, 1983, p.14).

Initiation into these three states of consciousness through music, art, meditation and contemplation, can bring about transformation. The first state creates dream-life changes. They are no longer chaotic; no longer reproductions of daily experiences often rendered in tangled symbols. Through initiation, a new world emerges; the astral world is always present and continuously surrounds the human being....This experience of conscious dream-filled sleep, the second state, then transmits itself into one's entire life in waking-day consciousness. The third state of consciousness is attained when one is able to transform dreamless sleep into a conscious state. This initiation



Rudolph Steiner 1861-1925

can be achieved through the discipline of “great stillness” before one can awaken to the astral world. Through these initiation processes and from an artistic perspective, the human organism can be viewed as a “musical instrument”.

Language becomes the important instrument through which knowledge and transformation can be attained and communicated. Reaney (1994) related the origin of a sense of time to the origin of language. Language is a powerful tool for bringing minds into contact and allowing new insights to develop. According to Steiner, “the totality and harmony of all consonants represent the sculptural form of the human organism while the vowel element represents the soul playing on this musical instrument”. However, language can also be a paradox, a barrier rather than a vehicle of knowing. Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said “*he who knows does not speak; he who speaks does not know*”.

We can corrupt words as easily as the corrupted minds invent them. In order for language to be effective and authentic, the set of ‘sound-symbols’ by the speaker

must be heard and responded to in sequence by the listener. This requires a “sequential inner sense of movement in time mimicking this sequential inner sense of the movement of speech. Both these aspects of subjective life are inextricably interwoven” (Reaney, 1994, p.38).

Steiner outlined his ideas about the evolution of human consciousness through the nature of music and how it evokes feelings, which he believed are the innermost elements of the soul, connected to the spiritual world.

Anthroposophical concept of intervals:- The relationship of tones to one another

Steiner believed that “when music is in a major key, one can observe how the sentient body is the victor over the etheric body. In the case of minor keys, the etheric body has been victor over the sentient body; opposing the vibrations of the sentient (physical) body” In other words the major keys can be seen as strong, masculine and outward reaching, and the minor keys as soft and feminine and introspective. This is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Steiner interpretations of musical intervals

Interval	Description
Unison	Inward, enclosed, absolute rest
Minor 2 nd	Inner movement, activity begins; still within oneself
Major 2 nd	Activity increases, movement carried further, yet asking for rest
Minor 3 rd	Rest is achieved; inner balance, laid back; movement has paused, still leaning back towards the major 2 nd
Major 3 rd	Inner balance: major, positive experiences, expression of self in tone
Perfect 4 th	Inner movement; first step towards reaching an outer relationship
Tritone	Possibility of withdrawing back (to 4 th , 3 rd , ...) or taking a step forward, outward
Perfect 5 th	Standing in balance with one’s inner self and the outer world; facing an outside experience to which one can related to oneself
Major 6 th	One moves out more actively; one is carried out to the world
Minor 7 th	Tension between self and what is outside the self
Major 7 th	This tension reaches its highest point – being outside; in Eurhythmy, hand quiver as a gesture
Octave	Caught self in relationship to the outer experience; not just a doubling of the same tone an octave higher, not a random experience; a further dimension of the self.

When humans live within the musical element, they live in a reflection of their spiritual home” (Reaney, 1994,p.8).

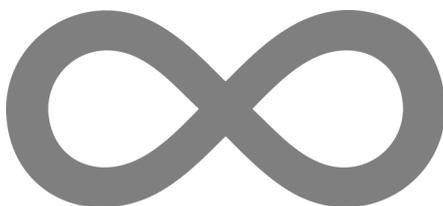
Steiner postulated that “in human evolution all musical experience first leads back to the ancient Atlantean time when the experience of the seventh was the essential musical experience. Eventually, in the post-Atlantean period, the fifths became the pleasurable experience throughout the tonal range of different octaves. During this time, there was no *f* or *c*. The experience of the fifth gave the impression of being lifted out of oneself. The experience of the third was introduced in the Baroque Period, signifying that humans began to feel like an earthly being and grounding into this physical reality became subjective, making “the whole musical feeling an inward experience ... humans felt they were singing” (Reaney, 1994, p.52).

The symbols and melodic shapes in songs

Songs are complex expressions of the emotions of the heart, the doings of humankind in the world, such as social injustices, environmental issues, spiritual ideals and beliefs etc. Each song has unique structures and shapes. The melody is composed to fit the words and the words are enhanced and exemplified by the melody. The brain loves the geometric shapes and patterns of songs and instrumental compositions.

The following example illustrates the shape and structure of Leonard Cohen’s *Hallelujah*. It is built around the feeling of the octave, which according to Steiner is the experience of the “*P*”. The octave shape is in a 2:1 ratio (See Figure 1) as each vibration of the octave note is exactly twice as fast the vibrations of the root tone.

Figure 1: The shape of the octave in 2:1 ratio



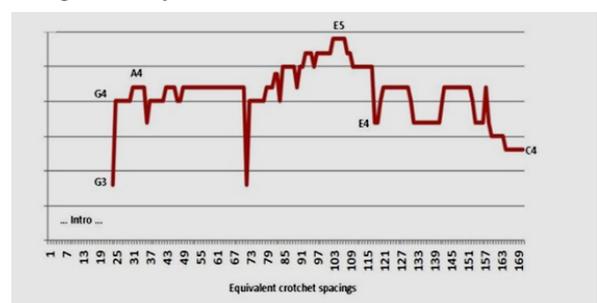
Steiner said that the feeling for the octave brings us to find ourselves on a higher level ... and leads us to have, to feel our own self once more” (p55). Zarlino, a 16th century music theorist, wrote that “the octave is the mother, the generator, the source and the origin from which every other consonance and every other interval is derived” (cited in Gardner 1990, p.106).

In *Hallelujah*, the octave lead-in of the beginning of each verse acts as a declaratory hook to the paradoxical storyline of the verses which counter the religious and transcendent element contained in the word “hallelujah”. However, the storyline in the verses, describes suffering within traumatic relationships. The slow progressive rise of the melody after the introductory octave leap shows melodic stability which is paradoxical to the sentiments expressed in the lyrics that relate to torn and broken relationships, such as the sentiment: “*It’s a cold and it’s a broken hallelujah*”.

The shape of the song *Hallelujah* by Leonard Cohen

The shape has a jagged contour which rises from the octave leap on the fifth to the sixth of the tonic, then descends back to the fifth note of the tonic which is part of the harmonic of the whole song which is written in the major key of C. The octave leap begins on the fifth in relation to the tonic which means that it must resolve back to the tonic eventually, after it has rambled around in fifths and sixths of the harmonic scale that it is set in. If this shape was joined with itself, it would be a jagged circle, representing a ‘torn and jagged “I” ‘ that has experienced traumatic relationships but has returned to itself, remaining whole.

Figure 2: The mathematical shape of the melody line of the song *Hallelujah*



Mandalas and vocal improvisation as symbols accessing the unconscious

Case study 1: Jennie's story

Vocal improvisation and mandalas were pivotal interventions and devices that helped Jennie to 'find her voice' and 'be heard' after years of psychotic depression. She felt de-humanised and 'not heard'. Jennie's mandala showed how her unconscious described the shape and layers of her 'I', her need to 'be heard' that developed in each vocal improvisation. Each time she sang her improvised vocalisations, she peeled back one more layer from her psyche and gradually became whole again. Her mandalas tracked her progress visually while her vocalisations created the energy of change inside her. After five years, she was able to live her life independently in her own way.

A *symbol* gives access to deeper layers of the psyche where, in those who have decompensated, no contact point existed and where everything was floating and disconnected (Kroeker, 2019).

Jung (1964) said that "the mandalic form is part of the psyche's inherent mechanism for healing psychic fragmentation". It represents the totality of the self in all its aspects. "Hallelujah" is one such song in mandalic form (represented by the infinity sign above) that progresses from ego-self to Higher-Self. This resonates with humans on an archetypal level. It is no wonder that this song is one of the biggest hits of its time!! It has an eternal aspect to it. Many folk songs have this kind of structure, making them eternal through the ages. Mandalas have the potential to assist in stabilizing, integrating and re-ordering one's inner life with symbols that represent progressively deeper levels of the unconscious mind in meditation. (Jung, 1964).

In my work, I encourage my clients to use therapeutic mandalas as visual expressions of their vocalizations following a vocal improvisation session.

Newham (1993) believed that vocal dynamics can truthfully reflect psychodynamics. He referred to vocalisations as being the animalistic, primal, pre-verbal utterances expressing the shadow (Newham, 1993).

Figure 3: Jennie's Mandala titled "I will be heard"



Case Study 2: Bert's story — Whistling as a musical symbol of inner thoughts linking to the unconscious

Bert was unable to communicate in the ordinary way because he had end-stage dementia. He was trying to reach his soul-self so that he could find his way back to his spiritual home. But first, he needed to bring together many elements within himself that lay deep inside his psyche. His musical symbol was *whistling* which he employed day and night in order to find out if he still existed. When I was referred to Bert in the nursing home, I immediately recognised his whistling as a musical symbol and helped him to use it as a vehicle of communication and personal discovery. This enabled him to plumb the depths of his unconscious through which his soul was able to take flight.

When our music ego is capable of listening, we become open to a tremendous capacity for a richly embodied experience

(Kroeker, 2019)

Conclusion

This essay is an enquiry into the nature of music and its links to what we understand to be consciousness. Many questions have been asked with very few answers. The aim of this article is to encourage more discussion and

thought about the subject of consciousness itself and how it ‘lives’ on the edge of physical reality like a bridge between matter and the non-material world.

We began our discussion by examining aspects of consciousness and some elements of music. Jung, spoke of how music creates the “movement of feelings that cling to unconscious processes” (Jung, 1964). Steiner believed that music connects human to the “depths of the flowing cosmic ocean” of the non-material world.

Reaney (1994) asserted that consciousness consisted of levels of awareness, knowingness and time, seeing an integrative act of consciousness as an act of knowing. Both Steiner and Reaney agreed that language is the important instrument whereby knowledge, awareness and transformation can be attained. Reaney also asserted that we can only know the world through time and that the origin of a sense of time passing is inextricably linked to the origin of languages which is acquired over time. Through time, we can realize that only our physical bodies die. He believed that “the waveform of knowing is critical to survival of the species”.

To Kroeker (2019) ‘music is a waking dream’ through which energy is received, frequency is perceived and understood and vibration is felt and connected to the ultimate uni-verse; the one song of the world.

Music contains complex symbols which express the emotions of the heart. Symbols such as the shape and structure of a song melody as well as its contours enhance the brain to listen and pay attention. Other examples of how music is linked to consciousness were two case studies in which vocal improvisation, mandalas and whistling became vehicles for connecting the disconnected parts of the psyche and bringing about wholeness and healing.

As Kroeker said, “*We need to listen to the music of life. It’s everywhere and it points the way into the depths of our unconscious, revealing the dynamics of our own inner world where the treasures lie*” (p.66). Music provides such a rich source of access to consciousness and evolution of the human soul. By listening to music, playing it and taking hold of positive lyrics, we can have more holistic and happier lives.

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Psychotherapy as a Spiritual Practice: A Jungian Perspective

Dr David Russell PhD

It is timely to construct a psychotherapy that aims to rupture the naïve allegiance that our culture has given to the objectification and commodification of self and, as an alternative, offer an invitation to enter, in a structured manner, the void inside us. Our personalities have a spiritual foundation as well as having a developmental aspect. The experience of consciousness, like all experience, is fashioned by desire, by body states that we have named ‘emotions.’

The social construct of self has offered a certain stability, a new seduction of certainty. The self could be, and has become in common understanding, the soul-like entity that extended the person into the psychological realm; the source of emotions, feelings, insights, and dreams (day-time and night-time dreaming). The self has become the answer to the experiential gap that separates the two horizons. The experience of nothingness was simply too much to bear! (see Novak, 1970). The fact that we can call something by name, such as a ‘feeling’, suggests that it is a thing, an entity, and the same goes for self. But feeling and self are verbs in that they do things: they are processes, indeed, complex ones, that generate the experiences of consciousness.

Jung’s use of the term ‘unconscious’ is imaginative; it does not designate a physical place between the two horizons of knowing. He wants it to remain a no-place, a place empty of substance, a place where nothing can be found: “The concept of unconscious *posits nothing*, it designates only my *unknowing*” (Jung, 1973, p. 411).

When he uses the term ‘Self’ he wants it to be understood as an archetypal image “... with no stable or definite centre in the unconscious and I [Jung] don’t believe such a centre exists. I believe that the thing which I call the Self is an ideal centre ...” (in Serrano, 1968, p. 50). So, for Jung the self is not a positively existing entity, rather, it exists as



an ‘as-if’ image and brings to our attention the status of a negation, of emptiness; an emptiness that is a fertile space for nourishing an appreciation of the evolutionary status of human consciousness.

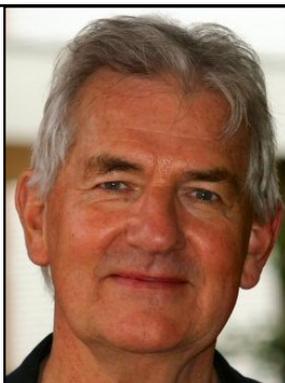
Jung’s attitude was to trust that the experiential ‘unknowing’ had purpose and if one trusted this felt-purpose then one’s daily activities would become more meaningful. This characteristic *subjectivity*, this fundamental acceptance of the wound of consciousness, offered a sense of redemption from suffering and ease of living (Jung, 1960, para. 407).

For Jung, it is this in-between that is the psychic space of inner experience.

In a letter to an American correspondent, he claimed that religion “is not at all a matter of intellectual conviction or philosophy or even belief, but rather a matter of inner experience” (Jung, 1976, p. 183).

Jung was convinced that this experience of the in-between was ultimately uncommunicable except in terms of myth or rich cultural storying. “Myth,” he wrote, “gives the ultimately unimaginable religious experience an image, a form in which to express itself” (Jung, 1976, p. 486). These cultural stories are descriptions of psychic processes “told by the many and heard by the many,” and as the primal form of communication, “makes community possible” (Jung, 1976, p. 486).

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The practice of consciousness, the awareness-of-awareness as a practice, the openness to doubt and uncertainty, generates a place for narrative imagination. This is a place of metaphoricity: a rich environment for the creation of metaphors. It is a place of desire and promise and, as a result of productively sitting in this place (which, itself is a no-place): “some transfer (*meta-phora*) of meaning is eventually, if always tentatively, achieved ... It is the place where stories, songs, parables, and prophecies resound as human imaginations try to say the unsayable and think the unthinkable” (Kearney, 2001, p. 8).

In this place, soul is made, psyche is offered ‘objectivity,’ the God-of-possibility (Kearney, 2001) comes into being. In Christian imagery, the Holy Spirit is now one’s guide.

Consciousness as dialogue, and religious consciousness as the awareness-of-awareness of the dialogue, is akin to the image of a rock face cracking, very slowly and deliberately, and out of the opening comes something different; some unexpected experience. From this fertile space come images, not formed ideas, which are limited to known visual images. These images are not even limited by lived experience these are psychic images and are unburdened by needing to conform to a fixed reality.

The experience of consciousness, like all experience, is fashioned by desire, by body states that we have named ‘emotions.’ In early Greek literature this embodied experience was attributed to Eros.

The Greek scholar and poet, Anne Carson, says that it was the poet Sappho who first called eros ‘bittersweet’ (Carson, 1998). Carson reminds us that eros denotes ‘want,’ ‘lack,’ ‘desire for what is missing.’ Carson, taking Sappho as her inspiration, develops the experience of eros as a dynamic of ambivalent emotions: ‘bittersweet’ as in the title of her book. And, “Desire moves. Eros is a verb” (Carson, 1998, p. 17).

The experience of consciousness is erotic to the core. Its reach (its desire) always exceeds its grasp (of concrete objects). In the poem that is Carson’s work bench, “... Sappho begins with a sweet apple and ends in infinite hunger. From her [Sappho’s] inchoate little poem we learn several things about eros. The reach of desire is defined in action:

beautiful (in its object), foiled (in its attempt), endless (in time)” (Carson, 1998, p. 29).

Eros denotes an absence, a hunger, a desire. The space that is experienced as an absence must be maintained or desire ends. The real subject of this love poem is not the human subject but the empty space that brings forth the desire. It is the presence of want that awakens in the protagonist of the poem a nostalgia for wholeness.

Clearly this is an early literary expression of what latter psychologists, particularly, William James and Carl Jung, would hypothesize as a biological function, a function that expresses itself as religious life.

The so-called empty space, the experience of loss, is for Jung precisely where an engagement with the divine begins. “Psychologically speaking” he writes, “the domain of the ‘gods’ begins where consciousness leaves off, for at that point man is already at the mercy of the natural order, whether he thrives or perish” (Jung, 1969, para. 231). And in another place he writes: “The gods have become diseases ...” (Jung, 1967, para. 54), and, to put this bold hypothesis in another way, it is through disease we experience the gods.

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This is an edited version of a talk given to the Canberra Jung Society in 2007.

Da Vinci's *Last Supper*: A Jungian interpretation

Robert Tulip

Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper* is a sublime parable of the heretical esoteric belief held by both Jung and Da Vinci that restoring the intimate connection between culture and nature, and thereby achieving a path towards grace, is the essential primary basis of human redemption. My talk to the Canberra Jung Society on 1 May 2020 explored Jung's framework of archetypes of the collective unconscious to explain the symbolism in Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. The full talk is available as both a video lecture and as text on my website, rtulip.net/astronomy. I encourage people to watch the lecture which explains the hypothesis in detail with simple animated diagrams.



Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519)

Da Vinci's *Last Supper* is recognized as one of the greatest artworks of all time. It dramatically depicts one of the central tragic moments of the Christian passion story, when Jesus tells his disciples that one of them will betray him and he identifies Judas as the culprit.

The disciples are shown in highly distinctive theatrical stances and reflect the intense realism of Da Vinci's anatomical method. Judas sits at the table indignantly holding his bag of thirty pieces of silver. Saint Peter leaps up behind Judas, holding the concealed dagger he will use tomorrow to cut off the ear of one of the group arresting Jesus. The strangely androgynous Saint John is at Jesus' right hand. On the other side of Jesus, doubting Thomas points his finger up to the sky, seemingly exhorting us to look up to the heavens for our salvation.

The variety of reactions depicted among the twelve disciples show a vast range of emotions, putting the story of Jesus into a completely human framework. Da Vinci illustrates moral sentiments of greed, stupidity and wickedness on the one extreme with Judas, and of gracious love, faith and sacrifice with Jesus on the other. Along the existential spectrum, we see indignation, bewilderment, analysis, shock, comfort, rancor, piety, care and anger, as the disciples react to the simple but unbelievable news from Christ about

Judas. However, this great painting is not just an historical story; it also contains an eternal message about how our life on earth is connected to the stable patterns of the cosmos. This cosmic message is just as empirical as Da Vinci's exact anatomical method, but far more controversial, reflecting a subtle and profound comment on religion.

My lecture proves how Da Vinci designed *The Last Supper* as a model of the visible universe, using the stars as his template for each figure. This analysis is an original hypothesis on my part, developed over the past decade. Back in 2011, a friend at the discussion board booktalk.org shared a version of Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper* in which Christ and the twelve disciples were replaced by a new imaginary pantheon with Gods and heroes from all around the world. This inspired me to analyse *The Last Supper* carefully.

One of my main personal interests is visual astronomy, looking at the constellations of the night sky. This star knowledge enabled me to see immediately, with some astonishment at the discovery, that Leonardo had used the stars of the zodiac, the path of the sun, with the twelve disciples from right to left modelled on the twelve zodiac constellations, and Jesus Christ modelled on Pisces.

The best way to see the proof of this contention is to watch my lecture, which provides simple, detailed empirical animated diagrams and explains how it fits with Leonardo's motives, as the real *Da Vinci Code*. For reasons of space, I will not explain all the correlations here, but encourage people to watch the lecture where they are laid out clearly.

Essentially, Da Vinci used the positions of the stars in the zodiac constellations to design the postures and hand positions in *The Last Supper*, with the shapes in the painting appearing in the same order as in the sky.

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One vivid example is the constellation of Scorpio which Da Vinci used for the posture of Saint Peter, with its distinctive curving shape and, particularly, Peter's dagger in the same position as the scorpion's sting.

Similar matching applies to all twelve disciples and to Christ. The dramatic centre of the whole painting is the reaction of Judas to being exposed by Christ. The constellation of Sagittarius consists of a series of wide pairs of visible stars in a shape popularly known as the teapot. The lines joining these stars are repeated in the positioning of Judas's right hand, right elbow, right shoulder, head, left elbow and left hand. The eight main stars in this constellation are in the same angular relationship as the rather complex figure of Judas.

To illustrate how Da Vinci's *Last Supper* symbolises the annual cycle of the seasons through the constellations, we can see that the twelve disciples form four groups of three, with each group representing one of the four seasons. This structural element reflects Da Vinci's understanding of how the story of Christ connects to the natural cycle of the year, and is just the start of the natural symbolism in this celebrated work.

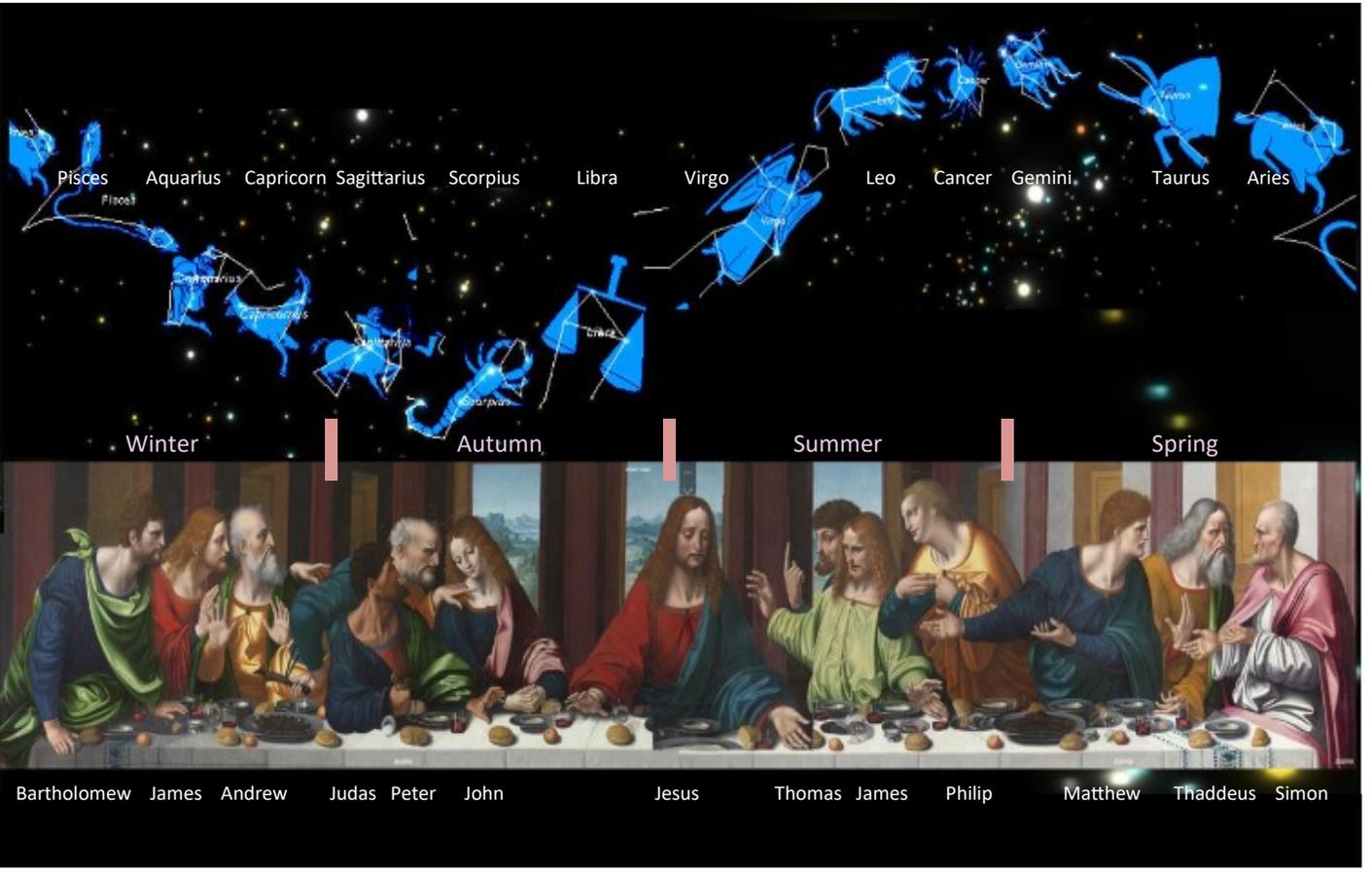
The underlying archetypal pattern of time inspired Da Vinci's design, with the one-to-twelve relationship between the solar year and the lunar month providing the foundation for the symbolic story of Jesus Christ and the twelve disciples.



Detail from Da Vinci's *Last Supper*

Artwork overlay © Robert Tulip

I consider this a major cultural discovery, shedding light on Da Vinci's methods and motives and also on the broad historical emergence of modern thought in the Renaissance. However, since making this discovery nearly a decade ago, I have been amazed at the great difficulty I have experienced in getting anyone to take an interest in it. People simply cannot accept that such a claim could have been hidden in plain sight for 500 years. The refusal to see this material can be compared to the principled rejection of heliocentrism by the church in the time of Galileo. Yet those who are familiar with the visible stars, or willing to look, can see it immediately once it is explained.



The figures in Da Vinci's *Last Supper* matched against the constellations and the seasons

Artwork overlay © Robert Tulip

It seems there are profound psychological blockages here. One possible factor is the modern rejection of astrology, with many people finding it preposterous that Da Vinci used zodiac motifs to bring together science and religion. The disdain toward astrology in religious and scientific communities makes this discovery a sort of double heresy against prevailing beliefs. Yet the stellar method I have described did not involve any astrology whatsoever on Da Vinci's part. It just involves precise natural observation, combined with his main philosophical idea that man is the model of the world.

The underlying idea is that the Gospel story of Jesus and the twelve can be understood by the idea in the Lord's Prayer – on earth as in heaven. Da Vinci imagined the historical event of the Last Supper mirroring the eternal stability of the cosmos as represented by the visible stars on the path of the sun. The widespread inability to engage in this important simple discovery is a mystery to me.

My paper looks at the psychological inability to see this discovery by exploring how Carl Jung's framework of archetypes of the collective unconscious helps to explain the symbolism in *The Last Supper*. Archetypes are stable natural patterns that underpin the meaning of cultural symbols. Jung and Da Vinci shared a deep understanding of natural archetypes, seen in their belief that restoring the connection between culture and nature is a primary moral concern, aiming to see a deeper reality, a sense of how our life fits within a whole story. Da Vinci's pioneering work of the exact depiction of nature, famous through his anatomical and botanical drawings, led him to insist that poets and painters should depict what exists in nature, exactly as he has done in *The Last Supper*.

The theme running through this whole analysis is that natural patterns are reflected in Christian myths. The rhythm of the seasons operates both in our conscious awareness and in our collective unconscious, supporting the archetypal mythological framework for Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter.

Analysis of unconscious factors in this natural cycle can help to connect scientific and religious worldviews, developing a rational framework for the meaning of mythology. Supernatural theories are implausible, but that does not make religion meaningless; rather it calls us to develop natural interpretations of the stories of faith. Jung explored such language in symbolic terms, seeing Biblical stories mainly in terms of what they say about the collective unconscious, and therefore what they mean for us today, rather than assuming that the stories describe actual historical events.

The Last Supper is a sublime example of the natural religious perspective shared by Da Vinci and Jung, their belief that reconnecting culture with nature creates a redemptive path toward a state of grace. This natural theology has been regarded as heresy by the church, creating a political and cultural psychology of repression that helps to explain why such ideas have not

been more widely discussed and tend to be rejected out of hand. Astrology is even more despised and rejected by both science and religion today than it was in Da Vinci's day. This helps to explain why Da Vinci did not discuss his use of the zodiac despite his work involving no astrology, and why this real *Da Vinci Code* has not been previously noticed. In our situation today, with the planetary ecological climate crisis; the alienation from nature promoted by conventional supernatural faith is a primary danger; and, the type of natural thinking seen in Da Vinci and Jung's work, offers a moral path out of the mess.

In his essay *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, Jung said: "ordinary facts, which are eternally repeated, create the mightiest archetypes of all". The natural patterns of time, such as days, weeks, months, seasons and years, are prime examples of such ordinary everyday facts being eternally repeated. Jung contended that such simple, familiar patterns serve as "the supreme regulating principles of religious and even political life, in unconscious recognition of their tremendous psychic power".

Looking at ancient symbols to justify Jung's claim that natural patterns regulate culture, we find abundant examples. The traditional natural symbols of the months are the zodiac stars, the twelve constellations, marking the annual path of the sun, were widely used in Christian art up until Leonardo's time. We do not need any astrological speculation to view this twelve-to-one ratio between a month and the year as an important analogy for the story of Jesus and the twelve disciples, as it simply describes the relationship between the observable periods of the sun and moon. Contrary to widespread modern assumptions, this use of zodiac figures need have nothing to do with astrology, but rather serves as an empirical framework to imagine how God is manifest in the stable order of the heavens, with no connection to fortune-telling.

With *The Last Supper* depicting a central event in the life of Christ, Jung's view of religion can inform our interpretation of this painting as involving creative archetypes. In his essay *Answer to Job*, Jung said: "The life of Christ is largely myth, and this mythical character is what expresses its universal human validity". Therefore, the significance and symbolism of the Gospel story rests on its ability to tap the archetypes of the collective unconscious.

The observation concealed in *The Last Supper*, that the story of Jesus personifies the religious function of the sun and moon, serves to ground our religious mythology in empirical observation. Perhaps this can help with the emerging debate about cultural values today, as our ethical frameworks endeavour to combine accurate observation and logical analysis as the highest moral values together with respect for the cultural heritage of the creative wisdom of the ages.



The Unconscious Revisited

Dr Bruce Stevens PhD

The unconscious was pioneered by Freud and Jung with relevance for therapy and personal growth. I will look at this concept from a different perspective that of implicit learning which has considerable research backing. This has implications for discovering our earliest spiritual awareness which will also be explored.

Beginnings are spiritually important. Awareness begins at birth – or perhaps before, at conception or in the womb (Cao-Lei et al., 2015). We might ask a few related questions: What early experiences most influence our developing spirituality? How does an infant first sense mystery or transcendence? When might God come into the picture? Yes, there are presently more questions than answers, but this may change with advances in developmental research.

There is abundant research that demonstrates the learning capacity of infants and young children. Arguably, this includes an ability to appreciate spiritual reality. I will argue that a developing spiritual awareness begins before any capacity for language. There is no exact word for this ability which I call unconscious spiritual learning, which hopefully, will function as a signpost pointing to what is formative of the spiritual self.

Potentially, understanding the origins of adult spirituality may have profound implications for the spiritual care of the aged. This could be the last opportunity for healing and a healthy spiritual perspective in the face of decline and death.



Research about early unconscious learning

Many attempts have been made to chart the ‘wordless realm’ of early learning. All with some validity, but these researchers generally make no attempt to include mystery, transcendence or an experience of God. And yet, all potentially contribute to our understanding of early spiritual formation. The territory is there, but the maps vary.

Sigmund Freud explored the unconscious. He saw a range of mental activities, occurring automatically, but not easily available to mental reflection. This includes memories, motivations, repressed feelings, instincts, desires, automatic skills, subliminal perceptions, habits and automatic reactions (Westen, 1999). This ‘grab bag’ of unconscious processes includes more than learning something without words. Carl Jung broke from an early allegiance to Freud to establish a different approach to the unconscious. He saw the unconscious as containing a store of repressed memories of the individual. In this realm there is an interaction of systems, including ego, complexes and archetypes (Walters, 1994). He also proposed a collective unconscious. Jung, though his theories are often speculative, has the advantage of being more sympathetic to a religious world view than Freud.

Professor Bruce A Stevens (adjunct CSU; PhD Boston Uni, 1987) is the founder of Canberra Clinical and Forensic Psychology offers evidence based psychology services for individuals and organisations. He has 25 years of clinical and forensic experience. He convened the clinical psychology training program at the University of Canberra and became a research professor at Charles Sturt University. Bruce is an endorsed clinical and forensic psychologist who offers workshops to train practitioners in Australia and overseas. He has written ten books -- the most recent being *Before Belief: Discovering first spiritual awareness* (Lexington, 2020).



I am proposing a shift from a generalized unconscious, with a range of processes, to a nonconscious learning process that is abundantly supported by empirical research. This is seen in what Michael Polanyi described as tacit knowledge. This might be thought of as a knowing beyond words to express, “This ineffable domain of skillful knowing is continuous in its inarticulateness with the knowledge possessed by animals and infants, who ... also possess the capacity for re-organizing their inarticulate knowledge and using it as an interpretive framework.” (Polanyi, 1958, p.90) He said that we know more than we can tell (Polanyi, 1967, p.4). Tacit knowledge is linked to what Arthur Reber called implicit learning, which he introduced in his 1965 master’s thesis, and later developed an understanding of this concept through a lifetime of research. Reber offered the definition “implicit learning is the acquisition of knowledge that takes place largely independently of consciousness attempts to learn and largely in the absence of explicit knowledge about what was acquired” (Reber, 1993, p.5). I think that both theories of tacit knowledge and implicit learning are limited in not acknowledging that such learning can be dysfunctional.

While a previous generation of pastoral carers acknowledged the contribution of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung (Eg. Ulanov & Dueck, 2008), their influence has waned and any acknowledgement of the unconscious passed with newer therapies. This does not banish the unconscious but it is timely to acknowledge a new and more research based model. Early learning is linked to the emotions, residing in the body, expressed in automatic skills and if early can remain inarticulate. Conscious learning tends to be cognitive, more easily expressed in language, focuses on facts, and begins to be evident by the age of three (Rothschild, 2000, p.29). This list of theoretical approaches is not exhaustive, but indicate some areas of relevant research. However, with rare exceptions, such understanding has not ‘brought any light’ to spiritual development. The attachment paradigm is an exception. Here extensive research has been applied to a believer’s relationship with God.

Attachment Theory and God

Attachment theory developed from the work of John Bowlby, a psychoanalyst and researcher. This theory offers four patterns of attachment between children and parents or carers (Colin, 1996). These patterns are determined early -- in the first year and clearly evident by 18 months. If a child’s needs are met, the assumption is that people are dependable. If not, attachment becomes anxious in different ways.

The research into attachment patterns involved watching how young children behave using the ‘strange situation’ test in which the young child is briefly separated from the care taker in the presence of an observing stranger. It was found that toddlers relate to adults in a variety of ways. The following patterns have been identified:

- *A style is avoidant*
- *B style is healthy*
- *C style is ambivalent*
- *D style is mixed (disorganised)*

Attachment theory is a theory of early unconscious learning since the patterns develop before language. It has influenced a range of disciplines and is probably familiar to most spiritual directors. Attachment patterns are considered to be foundational to later relationships: someone anxiously attached as a two-year-old is likely to have anxious relationships at 30 or 40 years later. Patricia Crittendon (2000) extended the attachment model to include adult categories of attachment.

Equally, it is possible to think of a religious person’s relationship to God in terms of attachment styles (Granqvist et al., 2012):

- *A style is avoidant.* Believers are commonly avoidant in terms of relating to God, “Let me get on with my life.” Of course, some will attend worship but not expect to relate to God.
- *B style is healthy.* There is enough relational stability to connect with God and to use personal resources in a flexible way. This healthy attachment can take many forms, but each will be characterized by the confidence that, “I know God will be there for me if things go wrong.”

- *C style is ambivalent.* This kind of believer is spiritually unstable. He or she may have periods of great enthusiasm for their faith, but it does not last. Perhaps commitment to the faith is erratic and may lead to disappointment followed by lasting bitterness. This person may say something like, “God is really important but is not really there for me when I most need help.”
- *D style is mixed (disorganized).* This confused style of attachment plays out in the spiritual realm as well. There is no consistency in relating to God, attending religious rituals or carrying out Christian service. The believer’s inner spiritual world is chaotic.

Attachment theory is a huge advance. It is supported by an impressive body of empirical research. The implications for spiritual direction are obvious. But it is essentially relational, typically dyadic in focus, and this is just ‘one slice of the pie’ of unconscious spiritual learning.

If we are to go back to the infant’s experience it is necessary to acknowledge the role of the senses. These are the ‘information pathways’ to shaping personality and spiritual formation.

The Senses

We experience reality. The five senses of Aristotle are the information pathways for learning: sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste (*De Anima*, Book 3. Polansky, 2007, pp.361-379).

Experience comes first. Later, words are helpful to reflect on experience: “That smells like a rose”, “It tastes like my mother’s apple pie”, “I can feel the soft fur, like a kitten”.

Language enables us to think and communicate but is secondary to experience. The Bible records the divine human encounter. The assumption is that all the senses are involved: “hear the word of the Lord” (Isa 1:10), promising that “the pure in heart ... they will see God” (Matt 5:8); “O, taste and see that the Lord is good!” (Ps 34:8); the faithful “spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him” (2 Cor 2:14). Indeed, the original witnesses to the resurrection testified that “we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our own hands, concerning the word of life” (I John 1:1). Perhaps we can appreciate how seriously God takes the material world (Col 2: 9).

The expression “spiritual senses” (*sensus spirituales*) first occurred in the Latin translation of Origen of Alexandria (c. 185- c. 254; Gavrilyuk and Coakley, 2012, p.2). This came to be systematized in Western medieval theology in relation to the senses: vision, audition, olfaction, touch and taste, usually by a reference to qualify such as “ears of faith” or “eyes of the soul”. Paul Gavrilyuk and Sarah Coakley (2012) have argued for the continuing relevance of the senses in the theological tradition. But these authors also acknowledge difficulties, since God is essentially a being who is unlike us and inherently mysterious, “we look not at what can be seen but to what cannot be seen” (2 Cor 4:18; Gavrilyuk & Coakley, pp.1-2).

However, Christians have long asserted the spiritual encounter is through the senses.

Augustine, for example, in his Confessions, “I have learnt to love you late, Beauty [God] at once so ancient and so new! ... You called me, you cried aloud to me; you broke my barrier of deafness. You shone upon me; your radiance enveloped me; you put my blindness to flight. You shed your fragrance about me; I drew breath and now I gasp for your sweet odour. I tasted you, and now I hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I am inflamed with love of your peace”

(Pine-Coffin,1961, Book 10:27, pp.231-232)

Sigurdson (2016) in *Heavenly Bodies* made the point that “neither theology nor philosophy gets at the body as theme and phenomenon in the human-life world other than through an interpretation of the pre-theoretical – if not pre-linguistic! – conceptions and experiences of the body that find expression in these texts and practices” (p.36).

This accords with the view of this paper that we first learn about God through direct experience and that this learning takes place through the senses. This process is initially non-cognitive or unconscious. And often, so it remains. The quest is to bring such learning into awareness and faithfully live with such insight.

Try for yourself the following stem: “The most important thing I learnt as a child was ...”.

A friend did this and ended the sentence: “You are on your own, kid!” This message revealed his implicit learning, providing a script of self-sufficiency throughout his life.

I tried this sentence completion and was surprised by my ending: “It is hard to be noticed.” I recalled that my parents were emotionally entangled. While my basic needs were met, there was not a lot of ‘noticing’ of me. This message explained my narcissistic quest [to be noticed]. I can now see that was the basis of my implicit learning which shaped my adult life. It is something I now accept with some reluctance.

You might like to try one or more of the following sentence completions:

- As a child I learned that I must ...
- I always accepted that I have to ... with people I love.
- If I do something different then the result will be ...
- What I never question about myself is ...

Try writing out 4-5 different endings. Then look over the list. Do any feel emotionally charged? This is a signal that your response is likely to contain hidden learning. Then refine the sentence until every word feels 100% right.

If nothing comes, then shift to another sensory pathway. For example, a visual image or a sound or a sense of touch may come. Stay with that sensation and see where it leads you. Then try to express what you feel in words.

When you have a statement that feels absolutely true, write it on a card and look at it once a day. Do nothing else in relation to the sentence for a week,



maybe two weeks. You might find that you are starting to question what you have written. Does another perspective arise? Do you start to question what you initially felt so certain about? You are in a process to challenge the hidden learning.

Also attempt this with early precognitive decisions you might have made:

- My most important decision as a child was to ...
- One commitment I never question is ...
- I have always known that I must ...

When you first try the sentence completion exercise, you may encounter a wall of resistance. This is a good indication that something is present outside your awareness. It is like you are in a boat and hit something in the water, unseen, that blocks your way. It is time to acknowledge and explore what stops your progress. Resistance to completing a sentence is *significant* because it will be based on prior learning. Persist. ‘Trial and error’ is fine, since this allows for a process of discovery.

Try: What is blocking me is ...

Now with Spiritual Learning

Now we will explore unconscious spiritual learning. We can use sentence stems for this as well:

- God is ...
- The most important thing I learnt about God is ...
- If I am in the presence of God, I must ...
- If I change a religious belief the result will be ...
- What I never question spiritually is ...

Be playful with this. I know such learning is ‘serious’ but insights cannot be forced. Once you have an insight about your hidden learning, whether spiritual or not, reflect on how valid it is for you now. This introduces the challenge of testing our early learning which is the focus of the next chapter, but first some other exercises to try.

When I did the sentence stem God is ... my answer was “over there” that is, not “here”. Again, this reflects some distance in my relationship with God (of course, one of my making). I hold this in tension with my certainty that God is somewhere. Hence: What I never question spiritually is the existence of God.

Conclusion

First experiences are important. These are the formative influences on the infant and young child, in terms of both personal and spiritual development. But this is a silent realm - pre-cognitive and before any capacity for language.

How do we approach this? What is beyond awareness or memory can be described as unconscious. Earlier attempts to understand this were based on Freud and Jung which led to a 'grab bag' of processes. Arguably more important is early learning, referred to by different terms such as implicit learning, in the research literature. The pathways to early learning are the five senses which also help us to understand early spiritual formation.

There is a reservoir of early learning which can be discovered. Essentially the process is putting what has been learnt in language. Sentence completion was proposed as an effective technique to reveal this learning. All this has clear pastoral implications, including caring for the aged, which were explored.



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The Silence

Translated by John Van de Graaff from a Dutch translation of the original in French, by Maurice Maeterlinck, Paris, 1896, entitled *Le Silence*, from *Le Trésor des humbles* (The Treasure of the Humble).

If it so happens that you are given a moment to descend into your soul – to the depths where angels dwell – then, rather than the words your loved one has spoken, you will recall the moments of silence which you have experienced together.

I hereby refer to an active silence: there is a passive silence which is nothing else but a consequence of sleep, death or non-existence. That is a sleeping silence. Through some unexpected event its brother, the great active silence, may take its place. Now pay attention. Two souls will now find each other, the walls crumble, the dams will break, and normal life makes way for a life where everything is serious, everything vulnerable, where one forgets nothing any more

And it is just because everyone knows this secret power and its dangerous effect, that we have such a great fear for silence. If necessary we will suffer a lonely silence, our private silence: but the silence of many persons, the communal silence, and the silence of a large crowd, seems an unbearable burden. We spend a great deal of our lives seeking those places which are not governed by silence.

Most of us permit entry for the silence only two or three times in our lives. And we only dare to do so during solemn occasions and everyone then receives this silence in an honourable manner, because even the most simple people have moments in their lives when they act as if they already knew that which the gods know.

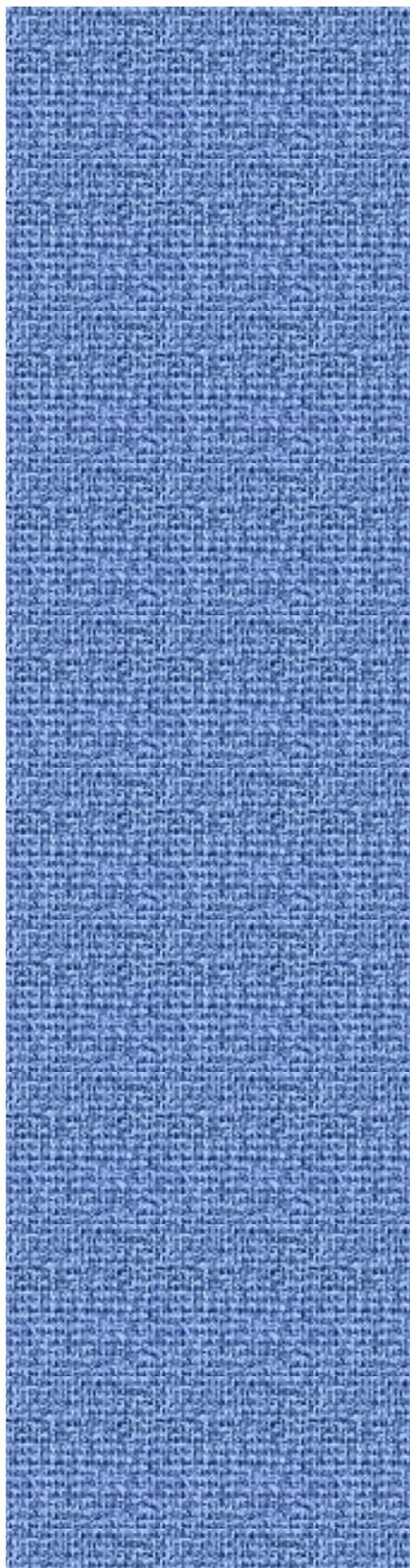
Do you remember the day when you, undaunted, had your first meeting with silence? The feared time had arrived and the silence met with your soul. You did not flee. On the occasion of a renewed acquaintance, or just before a parting, at a moment of intense joy, in the presence of death, or at the edge of danger. Do you remember the moments when all the hidden jewels saw the light of day and the slumbering truths suddenly awoke, and tell me then how good and necessary this silence was.

The kisses of the luckless silence – because silence grips us especially when in the throes of misfortune – are never forgotten, and therefore those who have experienced these more than others are richer than others. Maybe it is only they who know the silent and deep waters that support the thin layer of daily life.



Photo: Maksym Kaharlytski (Unsplash)

Canberra-based therapists with Jungian approaches



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