CREATIVE WRITING PRACTICE AND PEDAGOGY:  
A JUNGIAN APPROACH

by

Madeline Sonik

B.A., The University of Western Ontario, 1984  
M.A., The University of Western Ontario, 1985  
M.F.A., The University of British Columbia, 2002

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ABSTRACT

In conventional Creative Writing post-secondary classes, the focus of student training is technique, to the neglect of the unconscious in the learning process. Some educators, in fact, suggest that the role and workings of the unconscious are dangerous areas for Creative Writing educators to explore. This thesis, drawing on the work of Carl Jung, as well as of Jungians and post-Jungians, advocates that the unconscious, in fact, needs to be valued and worked with purposefully in the Creative Writing classroom. The notion of archetype, with particular reference to the “archetypal feminine,” is explored in this context.

At the outset it is argued that the primary elements of what has collectively been considered “great literature” consist of far more than their mere technical components. The transformational qualities of great literature arise through a flux of the living experience of universal human themes. These “archetypes,” as Jung called them, cannot be reduced to merely technical tools intended to assist the writer’s ego: they are autonomous energies that demand the ego’s engagement if they are to be integrated and expressed. Jung used the term “individuation” to signify the evolution of ego consciousness in an individual. This thesis introduces the concept of a “literary individuation,” in which student writers can find personal growth and maturation by engaging with the unconscious in the writing processes.

By defining and then applying many of Jung’s conceptualizations to Creative Writing practice and pedagogy, the generative importance of the ignored unconscious and the “archetypal feminine” begins to emerge. Student writers can use Jungian constructs to
better understand their characters, their writing, their own personalities, and their lives, while educators might consider making constructive curricular modifications that acknowledge and reinstate the importance of the unconscious.
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Preface

This thesis explores a new approach to Creative Writing education, based on concepts of the influential thinker and psychoanalytical pioneer Carl Jung. It represents the maturation of ideas that I have been developing both as a professional writer and writing instructor for more than 15 years. My first published fictional story, “Abiding Peace” (1990), which I include in this thesis, was also the first I wrote in which I began experimenting with Jungian concepts in the production of Creative Writing. Shortly after its publication, I began designing and teaching a wide range of continuing education Creative Writing classes, through which I was able to further investigate the application of certain Jungian ideas. My first published collection of short stories, *Drying the Bones* (2000), was a compilation of experimental stories that tested the validity of my methods. Some of the stories from that collection are similarly used as exemplars in this thesis.

I see my aim in this study as attempting to re-voice the “voiceless feminine” in creative writing practice and pedagogy, and this expression will reappear throughout my work. It is important to note at the outset (and this point will be further elucidated throughout the thesis) that the concept of the “feminine” as used here is fundamentally archetypal; it does not denote a gender distinction, but embraces both men and women. It has long been a concern of mine that the “archetypal feminine” is largely overlooked in current conventional Creative Writing teaching. It is my hope to identify this archetypal energy and explain how failure to acknowledge it can vitiate the depth of student engagement necessary for the production of exceptional literary art. By presenting a
broad Jungian framework, I seek to show how instructors might begin to give this archetype its due.

It is important also to note what the thesis is not. It is not intended to be the definitive word on Jung, Jungians, or post-Jungians, nor to argue or critique the fine points of Jungian or post-Jungian theory. Jungian methods and concepts are reflected in this thesis to the degree that I have understood and experienced them as useful in Creative Writing teaching and practice. Hence I limit myself to those Jungian theories and concepts which I have discovered from experience can enrich and enliven the experience of Creative Writing learners and illumine their literary productions. Since Jungian ideas have been transmitted in North America through the medium of English, and since they are similarly communicated to students through the medium of English, it has been deemed appropriate, indeed essential, to use the standard translations of Jung, rather than his original German text. Moreover, I have been able to use only a fraction of the large body of related works that I have consulted, and have limited myself to citing only those that I have found to be strictly relevant to my exploration of the topic.

In addition to consulting the work of scholars and of Creative Writing educators, I have been able to draw on my own experiences of Creative Writing education, both as a learner and a teacher. Over the years, I have been exposed to diverse learning environments. I bring my responses to grade school and high school Creative Writing instruction into my work, but particularly those to my post-secondary experiences in Creative Writing courses. In addition to formal academic training, both in Creative Writing and Journalism, I have participated in a number of private Creative Writing workshops and retreats in Canada, the United States, and England. In all of these settings
I have had the opportunity to observe and discuss informally Creative Writing teaching methods. As an instructor, I have taught adult learners in community college and at the university level, both graduate and undergraduate students. These experiences give me confidence that the proposals laid out in the following thesis have a sound theoretical basis, but could also be viable and workable in a practical instructional setting.
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Finally I want to thank my Aunt Hana, who inspired me some years ago to have the courage to grasp the opportunity of pursuing higher educations no matter how formidable the obstacles might seem.
Creative Writing Practice and Pedagogy:
A Jungian Approach

Introduction

Creative Writing Education began for me in the first grade. I was in a progressive school, in Chicago, and our teacher had allotted a great deal of class time to what were called “language arts.” These included everything from grammar, spelling and vocabulary to the reading and writing of stories and the production of our own plays. It was in Grade One that I first experienced the joy of opening myself to the thoughts and stories that inhabited my imagination, and attempted to transcribe them. In fact, I would go so far as to say that it was this desire to express the stories of my imagination that compelled me towards literacy.

I was not a particularly good student. I did not possess the memory or the consistency of exceptional students; my penmanship was awful, and I often found it difficult to give the “right” answer. I believe, in many ways, that this lack of exceptional scholastic ability allowed me the freedom to play, and in play I found the areas of scholarship which most interested and energised me. I have often wondered if writing would have become my art, my way of self-expression, if it had not been for the ironic fact that I had not excelled at it. I never felt the pressure that the good students felt to follow the grade school and high school recipes of writing, which included things like “the story outline,” “the plot graph,” and “the character sketch.” Teachers placed such great emphasis on the unwavering commitment to these procedural devices, which were so foreign to my own natural mode of creation that not only could I not follow them, but I could not comprehend how these things could possibly be helpful to anyone. I was amazed that students could actually create stories under what I saw as the handicap of these limitations.

Barbara Kamler’s autobiographical recollections of herself as a young writer in Relocating the Personal: A Critical Writing Pedagogy (2001) resonate in me: “I find no help in advice that tells me to write a plan first and follow it. When teachers require me to
submit the plan, I first write ... and do the plan later. How else do I know what I am going to say?” (p. xiii).

For me, as for Kamler, writing was always exploratory. Characters would come to life gradually, through words and awareness, and I was always surprised by the plots that enfolded in my stories—plots that the stories themselves seemed to generate. My role as writer seemed less one of “creator” and more one of “translator” or as “observer/recorder,” giving voice to the voiceless story. As my interest grew in writing, my interest also grew in the writing process. I struggled to understand it, and struggled even harder to accept the seeming absurdity of my own experiential conclusions. It did, indeed, seem to me that the story had its own life—that a story knew exactly what it wanted to say and that the best thing I could do as a writer was learn to get out of its way. It seemed to me that the more I tried to fit my good ideas into a story, or tried to make a story do something it did not naturally want to do, the more trouble I ultimately had in writing it.

This kind of thinking went against everything I had ever read in Creative Writing how-to books and everything I had ever been told in Creative Writing classes. Conscious structure and direction—ultimately conscious planning—were the supposedly necessary requirements in the development of successful fiction. There was no discussion of the demands of the story itself or what I would come to know as the demands of the “inner world.”

It was not until I began to study the works of Carl Jung and became familiar with Jungian analysis that I began to gain faith in my observations about the writing process. Jung’s conceptions of ego (that part of us which holds our consciousness and believes itself to be us) and the unconscious (that part of us we do not know but that wishes to make itself known) explained a great deal to me about my perceived writing process. Easily, I could delineate the “Unconscious” as the story maker and the “Ego” as the scribe, and in this understanding, I began to become increasingly aware of the importance of acknowledging and valuing both.

According to Jung, the conscious ego evolves towards a state of “individuation” or wholeness through its contact, struggles, and integration of unconscious contents. For Jung, this process is “archetypal.” In other words, it is a process that follows a deep human recurring pattern. The ego, like a human being, begins in a state of unawareness, residing within and totally identified with the unconscious. On awakening to its own
powers of discernment, the ego detaches from the unconscious and begins to experience its own identity as an “I,” oblivious to the demands and direction of the unconscious. Jung saw the development of the ego towards consciousness (the movement of battle, conquest and assimilation) as archetypally masculine, while he saw the diffuse, encompassing unconscious as archetypally feminine. As Erich Neumann (1954) tells us, “The correlation ‘consciousness-light-day’ and ‘unconscious-darkness-night’ holds true regardless of sex.... Consciousness, as such, is masculine even in women, just as the unconscious is feminine in men” (p. 42). Although seemingly paradoxical when considered from an archetypal standpoint, each can be seen as “a distinct category of being and a mode of perception inherent in all men, all women, all culture” (Ulanov, 1971, p. 13). Susan Rowland (2002) deals extensively with conceptions of the feminine in Jungian and post-Jungian contexts and posits that the term can refer “to the cultural construction of feminine characteristics as ‘other’ as historically conditioned, and not necessarily located in those with female bodies” (p. 39).1 Many Jungian theorists, such as Ann Ulanov, Marion Woodman and Irene Claremont de Castillejo, assert “that the feminine principle has been disastrously suppressed in culture and in individual psyches by centuries of patriarchal thinking” (Zweig, 1990, p. 55). Their analytical practices, therefore, exist in healing the wounded feminine, both collectively and in the psyche of individuals, both men and women.

As an undergraduate, I read Ann Wilson Schaef’s Women’s Reality: An Emerging Female System in a White Male Society, (1981) in which she outlined masculine and feminine ways of perceiving, valuing, thinking and communicating. She saw these as gender issues and insisted that the white male system was seen, in our culture, as the right way, and the female system as “sick, bad, crazy, or stupid” (p. 101). She wrote: “Far too frequently, women say only what is expected of them or acceptable in this culture. Their input generally falls into one of two categories: ‘women’s talk’ and ‘peacekeeping talk’” (p. 99). The first, she claimed, “is stereotyped as useless,” while the second supported the “White Male System” by intentionally not challenging its myths. “There is another kind of ‘women’s talk,’” however, Schaef said: “It is the kind that emerges during individual therapy, groups, and private conversations—situations in which women feel safe to explore their own evolving System” (p. 100).

At the time I read Schaef’s work, I was engaged in studying the lives and writing of contemporary female authors and, as a Creative Writing hobbyist myself, trying to
grasp why it was that sometimes the fiction I wrote “worked” and sometimes did not. Almost everything I read at this time I reframed into a writing context, trying to learn what that elusive secret ingredient was that could make or break a story. While I now see the issues raised by Schaef more broadly as elements in an archetypal psychic space, her observations were helpful in clarifying what has actually been suppressed and devalued. As Edward C. Whitmont (1982) writes, “none of the sociological explanations can really satisfy [our understanding of] the inferior status of women....Maleness and femaleness are archetypal forces. They constitute different ways of relating to life, to the world, and to the opposite sex. The repression of femininity, therefore, affects mankind’s relation to the cosmos no less than the relation of individual men and women to each other” (pp. 122-123).

The repression of the feminine also affects the way we teach and the way we learn to write. Schaef’s distinctions, for instance, provide us with some examples—“women’s talk” is equivalent to thinking and writing in clichés, while “peacekeeping talk” is equivalent to shutting down the imagination by allowing oneself to write only those things that do not disturb or disrupt conventional ways of reasoning. When I fist read Schaef as an undergraduate, the idea that writing was an exploration, a quest to recover an authentic voice, struck me profoundly, and when I began to uncover, discover, and recover unconscious content in Jungian study and analysis, the formulation of a hypothesis of a “voiceless feminine,” an entity present in all writing which seeks expression through the writing process and is both the story maker and the story, began to take shape for me.

Jungian counsellor Connie Zweig (1990) writes this about the archetypal feminine: “In the earlier transition from matriarchal consciousness into patriarchal consciousness, the Feminine is sacrificed and abandoned. In both men and women, she is banished from consciousness and goes underground, becoming part of the shadow world. As our own feminine nature evolves within the collective imagination and manifests in us and in society at large, the Feminine principle is transformed. The archetype breathes new life, takes on a new countenance, and offers us new meanings” (p. 8).

While the examination and resurrection of the “voiceless feminine” is occurring in many spheres and disciplines, I believe locating and acknowledging it in Creative Writing, both in process and education, is essential to the future life of literacy and meaningful literary art today. In grade schools and high schools, it is not the mechanized
devices of the rational “masculine” that stimulate student writing, but the mystery of the “voiceless feminine” and the desire to hear her voice that encourages it.

In *Rhetorical Traditions and the Teaching of Writing*, C. H. Knoblauch and Lillian Brannon (1984) discuss “the development of writing ability” and the way it is measured. While they do not directly differentiate between the masculine and feminine archetypal realms, they do present two significantly different areas of writing proficiency, which can be seen as corresponding to these opposing realms. One concerns the technical improvement of the text, grammar, spelling and the like; the other concerns the “growth of students as writers” (p. 151). As outlined in their work, the first is far easier to evaluate (and, one would presume, teach) than the latter. Yet this “mastering of surface conventions” (p. 153) is by no means the most important element in a writer’s development. “Those features of discourse which are most accessible to reliable measurement—the surface conventions—tend also to be the features having least to do with writers’ true competence—their ability to make and connect substantial assertions, to penetrate a subject, to discover plausible lines of reasoning, to articulate imaginative insights, to think well in language” (p. 154). All of these competencies require the inclusion of the archetypal feminine.

The “growth of students as writers” is also reflective of the feminine. It is more cyclical than linear. It proceeds “in an organic fashion, to an extent independent of, even though nurtured by, outside support, and often through extended stages of evolution” (p. 152). Yet archetypal masculine approaches to Creative Writing education with their unequivocal methods of evaluation do not offer a place of inclusion for the feminine:

Training students to follow simple orders offers the alluring possibility of ‘instant improvement,’ since only obedience is directly at stake, not intellectual development. Multiplying the number of artificial constraints to include the making of an outline, the recollection of some set of prewriting heuristics, the declaring of a thesis statement, the making of topic sentences, the writing of a ‘conclusion paragraph,’ and so forth, testing them all in turn, will enhance the illusion that improvement is occurring, thereby making the style of curriculum irresistible to teachers and administrators .... But the deeper development of writing ability, to the extent that it occurs at all, is proceeding at best accidentally in the context of the technical skill activities which constitute the focus of measurement—just as swimming in handcuffs or swimming under orders to keep one’s bathing cap from getting wet may accidentally improve the ability to swim, though the artificial constraint is not directly responsible. (p. 154)
At the post secondary level, the archetypal masculine also dominates, but here not so much by prescribing the writing process dictates as in placing emphasis on technique. Madison Smartt Bell, (1997), in his work *Narrative Design*, outlines the failings of such an approach:

Workshops on the Iowa model (95 percent of all workshops in academia) are nothing if not craft-driven. Their general mission is to teach a repertory of techniques.... It is all about the techniques of plot, of characterization, setting, description, point of view, voice, tone, and so on. The attitude of the group towards the work is surgical. (pp. 8-9)

While Bell believes there is a place for this “surgical” consideration in Creative Writing classrooms, he adds: “The procedure for passing on the craft tends to ignore that no stories are *originally* written on craft intelligence alone. There’s something else operating at the inception, something which needs to operate all the way through the period of composition, something which is much, much harder to talk about than craft” (p. 9).

Bell continues by attempting to define this “something” in terms of a biological functioning of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. “The left brain is the home of craft consciousness. Here is the warehouse for however many specific technical abilities you are able to acquire. Somewhere in the right brain, meanwhile, the black box full of creativity is stored” (p. 11).

The left hemisphere of the brain is supposed to be “logical,” “sequential,” “objective” and “analytical” (qualities associated with the masculine) while the right hemisphere of the brain is said to be “intuitive,” “holistic,” “synthesizing” and “subjective” (qualities associated with the feminine). While the left hemisphere contemplates the parts, the right hemisphere considers the whole. Both hemispheres exist in men and women, and the communication between the two hemispheres is necessary for daily functioning. Brain researchers, however, acknowledge that our society values and encourages left-hemisphere functioning to the detriment of right-hemisphere functioning.

Society is devoted to stressing left-brain skills in school, to encouraging the memorization of the right answer, or THE TRUTH. How many courses stress the importance of finding new approaches to problems rather than just memorizing old solutions? Hardly any. Most education is based on society’s collective left brain perpetuating the old patterns society values. (Williams & Stockmyer, 1987, p. 22)
Even though Creative Writing, by virtue of the word “creative,” might be associated with right brain functioning, Bell (1997) sees Creative Writing workshops as developing the brain’s left hemisphere at the expense of the right. Consequently, writers coming from such workshops may be faced with an array of creativity problems. They may, for example, be able to produce technically brilliant work, but their work may consistently lack imaginative life. They may become “stuck,” “paralysed” and “self conscious” under the burden of the left hemisphere imbalance (p. 15).

Although I shall occasionally be referring to data that addresses human biological and anatomical considerations, I find that the reduction of “the archetypal” to the functioning of the brain is limiting, and I see this urge to reduce as one of the symptoms of the problem I am hoping to address. To equate the “voiceless feminine” with the neglected right hemisphere of the brain would be to strip it of its rich symbolic character, which is expansive, transformative, multi-dimensional and animating. In this thesis, I am hoping not only to suggest ways of locating, defining, and resurrecting the “voiceless feminine” in Creative Writing practice and education, but also to demonstrate ways of approaching it that do not ravage or diminish it. I see this as a delicate task, requiring the sharp “masculine” discernment of ego consciousness applied in ways that are not customary in the conventions of critical inquiry. Rather than objectify the “voiceless feminine” and dissect her with a clinician’s scrutiny in order to understand her, I believe the ego must recognize its position as her assistant and strive not only to utilise its good tools in her service, but also willingly to submit to her transforming and animating spirit.
For centuries, the Holy Grail of literary scholars has been a universal definition of “great literature.” Among the better known modern commentators, David Daiches (1968) sees the great novel as “that cumulative presentation of significance where at each point every unit of expression contributes its quota to the great sum of reverberating meaning” (p. 108). Daiches faces many rivals. Harold Bloom (1993) suggests that all great literary work is marked by “strangeness, a mode of originality that either cannot be assimilated, or that so assimilates us that we cease to see it as strange” (p. 4). Roger Shattock attempts to encapsulate great literature in its paradox. “It is at the same time a period piece and forever young. It displays aspects that allow us to perceive in it a strong element of simplicity and clarity. It also awes us by the mystery and complexity it contains. It will create the sense of confronting concrete, individual situations and character, which at the same time reach towards the domain of ... the universal” (Nemoianu and Royal, 1991, p. 91). Clearly, there is no consensus on what constitutes the qualities of great literature. As Charles Clausen writes: “[a]ny theoretical master key ... could open only a very small door, like the garden door that Alice was too large to crawl through” (Nemoianu and Royal, 1991, p. 203). True enough, perhaps. Yet, as Creative Writing instructors, many of us can not help but be preoccupied by the question of what constitutes great literature, and how this might affect what we teach our students.  

In our postmodern age the thought of “Great Literature” grows more obsolete. The Western literary canon, the embodiment of what is considered “great,” is found elitist and ethnocentric. What one reads in a comic book, or on the back of a cereal box, or scrawled in a subway terminal, may hold more intrinsic meaning and larger significance for an individual than the works of Shakespeare. Long gone are the days when Great Literature was defined simply by its power to endure.

For writing educators, the struggles increasingly focus on basic issues of literacy. In higher education and in programs specifically designed to teach Creative Writing, the goal is to teach aspiring writers “craft,” not art. The argument that the art of writing cannot really be taught—that “great writers” are born, not made, is often put forward. As Nigel Watts (1996) says of the novel: “[y]ou can teach Craft, but Art can only be learnt. A novel, as any piece of creative writing, comprises two aspects: the craft, that is, the
mechanics of its construction, and the art, namely the quality of its construction. The mechanics of writing can easily be learnt: a page of diagrams can be memorised, a list digested .... Quality, however, is more difficult to learn” (p. 3).

Author and college writing teacher Margaret Walker (1973) echoes Watts: “I believe that the writer can be taught many things .... I believe he can be taught structure, I believe he can be taught a great deal about the elements of fiction. I do not believe he can be taught the art of fiction. I believe there is a distinct difference between craft and art” (Conference on Teaching Creative Writing, p. 75).

Creative Writing teacher Victor Jones (1974) begins his book Creative Writing with “Basic Considerations” encompassing “Talent and Training.” Jones’s views are similar to the vast majority of author-instructors who write about the art and craft of writing. Talent and training are seen as two distinct spheres, which the writer must negotiate in order to produce exceptional writing. Talent is seen as something inborn, not as something accessible to everyone, and certainly as something un-teachable. “Training,” on the other hand, is the teaching of technique that will support talent: “No talent can fulfil itself without strict control, without some kind of training in the disciplines of its particular art” (p. 15). As with most forms of art, there is a decided spiritual sense of “calling.” Those born with talent can learn technique and become artists—while those without talent, no matter what technical abilities they learn, will never achieve “art.” As writer and writing instructor Elliot Coleman (1973) puts it:

I think the relationship of the man running the writers’ program is not that of teacher but of coach. If somebody shows up with the right body and the right motivation and the right coordination—let’s say the boy is six foot two and can do a hundred yards in 10 seconds wearing a football uniform and has good hands and understands the play—almost any coach could make a good end out that man. But if he comes with a fervent desire to play, but lacks the body and the coordination, what can you say? You know, take your complaints to your own genetic structure, you haven’t got it. I think that’s one of the honest things that might have to be said (p. 6).

As Creative Writing instructors, many of us have come to believe that we can only prepare our students by giving them the technical abilities to write. We can teach them to translate the deep, wise and resonant inner voice when heard, but that voice comes naturally, like one’s genetic inheritance, and only comes to a chosen few. On the one hand, we can say that exceptional literary art displays great technical skills: the
appropriateness of diction, the beauty of language, imagery, and metaphor; the skilful ability of the language to render such elements as plot, character, or point of view. These are the focus of many Creative Writing classes and programs, and fall under the label of craft. Less concretely, exceptional literary art displays an ability to transform us. Even when it is fantastic, great literature deals with problems and patterns of humanity and of the human soul; it gives us expansive insights into these, without ever giving us reductive answers. Great literature makes us think and makes us question, as Tom Absher (1990) in *Men and the Goddess* tells us: “lasting works of literature reach deep into the human condition and in so doing force an encounter with dimensions of our humanness” (p. xiii). This less concrete side to great literature is something that conventional Creative Writing programs do not formally deal with in student writing—something which, if it were formally considered, would most likely fall under the un-teachable classification of talent.

Terrence Moore (2004) in his editorial regarding great literature touches upon the technique bias as it shows itself in the teaching of great literary works:

I well remember reading *The Scarlet Letter* in high school and, under the guidance of my teacher, thinking that it was a novel about colors competing against each other, namely, red vs. black. There was a larger theme, of course; we always had three to choose from: man vs. man, man vs. society, man vs. nature. On the test we all put down that the character Hester Prynne demonstrated the theme of man vs. society. That was it. After this mechanical treatment of the text the brightest among us did not realise that here was a story about a woman who had somehow lost one husband, had an affair with the town minister resulting in an illegitimate child, and was vilified by everyone in the town (np.)

Although *The Scarlet Letter* was originally published in 1850 and set in the mid-1600s, the larger concerns that Moore identifies are those human patterns (death and rebirth, heroism and cowardice, infidelity and devotion, passion and reason, hubris and humility) that people live, and struggle with, and have done since time in memoriam. As Azar Nafisi (2003) writes: “in all great works of fiction, regardless of the grim reality they present, there is an affirmation of life against the transience of that life …. Every great work of art, I would declare pompously, is a celebration, an act of insubordination against the betrayals, horrors and infidelities of life” (p. 47). Exceptional literary art has the capacity to extend into the human psyche, and through an imaginal encounter, bring about psychological change.
In great fiction...we not only respond to imaginary things—sights, sounds, smells—as though they were real, we respond to fictional problems as though they were real: We sympathize, think, and judge. We act out, vicariously, the trials of the characters and learn from the failures and successes of particular modes of action, particularly attitudes, opinions, assertions, and beliefs exactly as we learn from life. Thus the value of great fiction ... is not just that it entertains us or distracts us from our troubles, not just that it broadens our knowledge of people and places, but also that it helps us to know what we believe, reinforces those qualities that are noblest in us, leads us to feel uneasy about our faults and limitations [and allows and assists us in better understanding ourselves]. (Gardner, 1983, p. 31)

Peter Brook (1987) in his discussion of Freudian psychoanalysis and the study of literature suggests that psychology and literature have always had an affinity for one another because “the structure of literature is in some sense the structure of mind—not a specific mind, but ... the dynamic organisation of the psyche” (p. 337). Literature mirrors the psyche, and in so doing, has the capacity to render the dynamic universal patterns that human beings live.

The concept of universal human patterns and the way they emerge in literature might greatly benefit students of Creative Writing in their pursuit of writing excellence and could be explored by considering Jung’s ideas about the “collective unconscious” and “archetypes.” According to Jung, (1959), there is a “personal unconscious” composed of unknown, disowned, and un-regarded content of a “personal nature”—and there is also, beyond this, a collective unconscious, which is a “deeper layer” that contains universal content, the “modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us” (p. 4). He writes (1966) that great literature “draws its strength from the life of mankind .... Whenever the collective unconscious becomes a living experience and is brought to bear upon the conscious outlook of an age, this event is a creative act which is of importance for a whole epoch. A work of art is produced that may truthfully be called a message to generations of men (p. 98). It is the contents of the collective unconscious that Jung called “the archetypes.” Jung’s self-analysis as well as his work with patients demonstrated “that imagery fell into patterns, that these patterns were reminiscent of myth, legend and fairytale, and that the imaginal material did not originate in perceptions, memory or conscious experience. The images seemed to Jung to reflect universal human modes of experience and behaviour.... Jung also satisfied himself that no theory of migration could explain the ubiquity of
certain cultural motifs” (Samuels, 1985, p. 24). As explained by Samuels, Shorter & Plaut (1986) in A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis, “archetypes are recognisable in outer behaviours, especially those that cluster around the basic and universal experiences of life such as birth, marriage, motherhood, death and separation. They also adhere to the structure of the human psyche itself and are observable in relation to inner or psychic life.... Theoretically, there could be any number of archetypes” (p. 26).

“An archetype can never be fully manifest in the conscious mind, let alone a literary text” (Rowland, 1999, p. 3) as it “is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear” (Jung, 1959, p. 5). In itself, it is “irrepresentable.” However, “archetypal images allow us to perceive it” (Jacobi, 1971, p. 35).

The “archetypal images” have great power. They have “a tremendous impact on the individual, gripping him and holding him in a grip, often...with an accompanying feeling of mystery and awe” (Samuels, 1985, p. 29). A person who finds himself in the grip of an archetypal image will find it impossible to remain unaffected by it. Significantly, the images can appear in dreams and visions. In these instances, Jung (1959) tells us, they are “much more individual, less understandable, and more naive than in myths...” (p. 5).

The archetypal image, because it can be conceptualized as a “transcultural constant” existing outside of culture and history, can be an anathema in some disciplines. As Susan Rowland (1999) points out, in traditional Jungian literary criticism, such a position gives adherents license “to criticize culture and all other ideologies as inferior discourses” (p. 3). In Creative Writing, however, such a position works to allow the writer to report upon the cultural and historical enmeshments of his or her own ego. In other words, finding a ground outside of one’s culture and history, while at the same time acknowledging one’s participation in it, extends the field of consciousness in the writer without a positive or negative judgement, and, ultimately, allows the written product to reflect this larger, more discerning awareness.

In Jungian analysis, the analyst attempts to assist the analysand in “integrating” powerful archetypal contents, which are incorporated when they are “divested of their power and autonomy” and “rendered intelligible on the personal level. ... If this happens, if the [analysand’s] ego can manage such integration, then the personality is enriched”
(Jung, 1959, p. 5), and there occurs in the analysand a transformational and healing experience. As Joel Weishaus (2004) points out, “when we speak of healing, we are not concerned with overcoming illness but of becoming whole. ‘Heal’ and ‘whole’ share the same etymological roots” (p. 5).

Similarly, both the writing and reading of literature can heal in the sense of making one whole. As Hillman (1983) writes, “trauma is not what happened but the way we see what happened. A trauma is not a pathological event but a pathologized image, an image that has become ‘intolerable’” (p. 47). If we or the collective we live in is fragmented because of these pathologized images, it is the imagination that can recover our sense of wholeness by evolving these images as they emerge from our psyche (p. 47).

The writing and reading of literature, like therapy, revives “the imagination and exercises it.... ‘Word-images’...are free from the perceptible world and free one from it” (p. 47). Stories motivate our psychic and emotional participation. And like an alchemical vessel, a story can contain our feelings, allowing for a transformation in consciousness to occur.

The dark furnace of the cauldron is an active space, full of forces which can remake us. For the analyst, the cauldron is the enclosure of the room, and the hour.... [F]or the writer, it’s the story which contains the paradoxical combination of physical and psychic realities. In the cauldron, we rediscover the invisible powers that created us. The best stories are more than their storylines, bonded to the very liquid and unfathomable essence of the human condition. We need imagination to see again, and with true images we gain consciousness. (Hancock, 1991, p. 17)

Andrew Brink (1982) suggests that the creation of literary art serves a psychological reparative function for the artist.

If the arts were openly to become self-therapeutic, with the poet a kind of shaman, little would be lost and much guidance given....It would be worth trying to show that in other eras of culture, and in other societies, ritual, religion and the attendant arts served better than they do in ours to sustain mental health. Instances of self-healing through artistic symbolic repair in our era or imperious individualism may be rarer than in other times and places, but this is a matter of speculation. We certainly should look again at the artist and his products as aspects of a single system of communication about the meaning of relationships and an inherent wish to repair them when they go wrong. (p. 98)

John Allan and Judi Bertoia (1992) found that children and adolescents were able to “transform some very negative emotions and painful experiences” as well as “gain new understanding of themselves and their world and...make substantive changes in their
perceptions, cognitions, and behaviour" through writing (p. 3). Literary artists often do precisely the same thing. However, what distinguishes one form of writing from the other, and what distinguishes Creative Writing from personal therapy, is the ability of the literary artist to image this personal process that wells from the unconscious in such a way that others can partake of the experience too. The more complete the experience for the reader, the more successful the writing student has been in engaging with and translating her own experience.

It is, therefore, my contention that Creative Writing students who seek to create meaningful and transformational literature must be trained to first identify and then render the archetype intelligible. They must be given direction in translating the archetype for the collective as well as for themselves. As Bettina L. Knapp (1989) writes, "great Creative endeavours must be looked upon...not merely as personal expressions, but as revelations; not simply as individual offerings extracted from their author’s depths, but as an indication of what lies hidden ‘behind the scenes’ for the collective” (pp. 3-4). Identification of the “archetype” as a component of the abstract “art” side of creative writing would assist student writers and instructors in extremely useful ways. Primarily, it would offer a concrete locus in the abstract domain of what has been, up to this point, an unidentifiable component in the making of great literature. It would allow Creative Writing instructors to consciously embrace the role of midwife to their students’ unconscious content, with a greater understanding of the potential risks, hazards and benefits. Ultimately, along with brilliant and flawless technique, it would assist student writers to mature both as artists and individuals, while at the same time assure the production of deeper and more collectively meaningful works.

The idea that an understanding of archetypes and their expression is useful to writers and writing students is not new. Christopher Vogler (1992) in *The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structures for Storytellers & Screenwriters*, adopted as a course text for many North American screen writing courses, observes the understanding of archetypes is “one of the most powerful elements in the modern storyteller’s bag of tricks” (p. 14). His text takes as its starting place Joseph Campbell’s work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell, influenced by Jung’s concept of archetypes, studied world hero myths and discovered “that they are all basically the same story, retold endlessly in infinite variations” (p. 14). Vogler argues that an understanding of the parts, characters and movement of the archetypal Hero’s Journey can assist writers in creating stories that
“have the ring of psychological truth” (p. 15). Vogler believes that by using mythic sources, writers can create stories that “are accurate models of the workings of the human mind, [and] true maps of the psyche” (p. 15)—stories, that are “psychologically valid and emotionally realistic even when they portray fantastic, impossible, or unreal events” (p. 5). The stories “can be felt by everyone, because they well up from a universal source in the shared unconscious and reflect universal concerns” (p. 15). Specifically Vogler sees the concept of archetypes as “an indispensable tool for understanding the purpose or function of characters in a story” (p. 33).

Another approach in using archetypes is put forward by James N. Frey (2000) in *The Key: How to Write Damn Good Fiction Using the Power of Myth*. Like Vogler, Frey draws on Campbell’s book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and on the “monomyth” of the hero’s quest. He calls fiction that self-consciously uses a mythic structure “myth-based fiction,” and says such fiction “has a profound psychological effect on the reader” and “increases reader identification with the hero, ties the reader emotionally to the story, and forges an unbreakable bond with the reader” (p. 13). “Mythic forms resonate in every individual human being on this planet,” he writes. “When a human being encounters some version of a myth, the individual responds at a very deep level, subconsciously, and is powerfully drawn to it as by magic. The force of myth is irresistible. Mythic forms and mythic structures are the foundation on which all good stories are built; these forms and structures are the key a modern fiction writer can use to create powerful fiction” (p. 36).

While both Vogler’s and Frey’s work may be useful for the writer and student writer in the explorations of the Hero’s Journey as a kind of plot and character template, the scope of both works seem severely reductive. Not every story boils down to the “Hero’s Journey,” and the expression of an archetype, when reduced to a “tool” in a “writer’s bag of tricks,” minimizes its captivating and revelatory qualities that can inspire the writer.

Jung (1969) writes about the reduction of the archetype and the archetypal image in the context of religion. “The archetypal images are so packed with meaning in themselves that people never think of asking what they really do mean. That the gods die from time to time is due to man’s sudden discovery that they do not mean anything, that they are made by human hands, useless idols of wood and stone. In reality, however, he has merely discovered that up till then he has never thought about his images at all. And when he starts thinking about them, he does so with the help of what he calls ‘reason’—which in point of fact is nothing more than the sum-total of all his prejudices and myopic
views” (p. 13). In Vogler’s and Frey’s work, the idols of wood and stone are put to the service of writing craft, but they are still nothing more than lifeless tools. The living dimension of the archetype, the part that is “meant to attract, to convince, to fascinate, and to overpower” (Jung, 1969, p. 8), is not, for Vogler and Frey, something the writer engages with but a sleight-of-hand trick she uses to manipulate an audience. When archetypes and archetypal images are used merely for technical ends and the writer’s energies are all funnelled into eliciting a particular reaction from an audience, the genuine response of the writer to her own work and the resulting transformation of her consciousness are lost. Jung tells us that the archetypal image is “created out of the primal stuff of revelation” (p. 8). And it is the revelation within the writer as she writes and reflects upon the archetypal image that can both activate and ignite revelation in the reader.

It is the power of “revelation” that compels the writer and reader both. It is the mystery of the archetype and the archetypal image that engages us. Eudora Welty (2005) notes that, “in the best stories, we return at the last to see mystery again….The great stories of the world are the ones that seem new to their readers on and on, always new because they keep their power of revealing something” (p. 21). We are engaged through human curiosity, through a desire and courage to discover and know, through our primal instinctive nature to accumulate understanding, to learn. “You write it all, discovering it at the end of the line of words. The line of words is a fiber optic, flexible as wire; it illuminates the path just before its fragile tip. You probe with it, delicate as a worm” (Dillard, 1989, p. 7).

Archetypal energy cannot be held at arms’ length. We, as writers, lose a great deal when we put ourselves above it and take a purely technical “writing craft” approach, yet the craft approach to the mysterious and numinous, to the mythic with its latent powers to transform, is the way many instructors teach student creative writers how to write. They attempt to teach them how to “put” mystery into their writing—how to elicit revelation in their audience—just as we put vitamins into bread made with bleached flour. While many instructors acknowledge that revelation is an essential component of all story telling—they talk about the concept of “the narrative hook,” which they dogmatically insist should occur in the first paragraph, usually the first sentence, of a story. Like the Writer’s Digest Encyclopaedia, many instructors tell their students: “A narrative hook may take any number of forms—a startling quotation, a mention of murder or disaster, a vivid
description of a fascinating character. Anything that stimulates a reader's curiosity and promises action to come makes an effective hook; but it should be accomplished in approximately the first two hundred words" (Narrative hook, n.d., para. 1).

Like Shawn Scarber (2003), many instructors teach that "the key to a good hook is hiding as much information as possible while revealing enough to interest a reader. After the first paragraph a reader should be asking questions about the characters involved (who?), their motivations (what?), the story's time and place (when and where?), and finally the reason behind all this action (why?)" (para. 1). And in order to keep the reader "hooked," the student is taught to contrive a constant flow of unanswered questions.

Many instructors do not tell their students that the most organic way to seek revelation in fiction is to write about those things that inspire their curiosity and fascination. They do not tell them to write with the aim of learning, exploring and discovering. Instead, they are more apt to tell them: "write what you know." Many prefer students to plan their revelations in advance and to know their revelations before they begin writing. The personal inner experience of writing and the way it acts upon the writer spontaneously are things many instructors do not address in Creative Writing workshops and classrooms. Many focus, instead, upon the externals of technique. Madison Smartt Bell (1997) echoes the concern of Creative Writing educators who are aware of the inner dimensions of writing, but fearful of their exploitation:

It's not that students' inner process can't be influenced from without. It's that it shouldn't be. Inner process is the student's business and not the teacher's. An ethical teacher may recommend devices to stimulate the process of imagination, but that is a different matter from participating in them. It's probably true that, for the individual, the practice of art is not entirely distinct from the practice of working out one's private psychological problems, but as a teacher, you don't want to go fooling around in the area where these two overlap. (p. 15)

Too little is known about the place where "the practice of art" and the movement of the psyche "overlap." Ignorance of the workings of the inner world keeps us fearful of approaching or even discussing it. When we do discuss it, we discuss it in terms of the dangers that lurk there: potential "psychological problems" in our students which we, as Creative Writing teachers, have no training to deal with (p. 15), or invasive mind control tactics, which unscrupulous teachers could employ if allowed to penetrate the inner world of the student. Not addressing the existence of the writer's inner world, however, is, in truth, less of a safeguard against these abuses. The inner world of the writing student not
only exists, but its processes are integral in the act of artistic creation. As Creative Writing teachers, we are already “fooling around in the area where these two overlap.” Ignoring the inner world does not make it go away, nor does it make it less susceptible to external injury. In fact, ignoring the writer’s inner world in our teaching practices, and proceeding as if it did not exist, may be doing more injury than we imagine. By imposing only technical outer world trappings to student writing, we may be diminishing students’ ability to regard, engage with, and trust their inner world. When everything is dealt with as form, structure, character arcs, etc., the inner experience of the writer, the “potential revelation,” the magic we feel when we touch those inner realms evaporates into a reductive haze.

In my own experience, I have known many students who have graduated with degrees in Creative Writing and have never written again for a variety of reasons. Some have told me this is because they no longer have any stories left inside of them to write; others have said because they could not write as prescribed; others still have said that the entire act of writing seemed overly contrived to them. I have known those whose authentic breaking voices have been homogenised and ultimately lost as they have acquired conventional techniques. All of these injuries, I believe, are the result of our inability to validate the inner world, to acknowledge its supreme function, to recognize and support its existence in spite of its potential messiness. Injuries are perpetrated because our bright, externally biased, one-sided culture has a love of beauty, but a fear of interiority, curiosity, and things unseen.

The ancient myth of Pandora well reflects this and demonstrates, symbolically, the way the domination of the archetypal masculine works to create a beautiful empty vessel of the archetypal feminine with both destructive and hopeful consequences. Pandora is the first woman. Prior to her creation, there is no acknowledged feminine among men. The myth tells us that Zeus created Pandora as a punishment to Prometheus. Prometheus, an old god, created men and stole fire from the gods in order that man could begin to develop civilization. Fire is associated with masculine consciousness, illumination, enlightenment, and passion. Edinger (1972) says, “Prometheus is a Luciferian figure whose daring initiates ego development at the price of suffering” (p. 24).

On the personal level the act of daring to acquire a new consciousness is experienced as a crime or rebellion against the authorities that exist in one’s
personal environment, against one’s parents, and later against other outer authorities: Any step in individuation is experienced as a crime against the collective, because it challenges the individual’s identification with some representative of the collective, whether it be family, party, church, or nation. At the same time each step, since it is truly an inflated act, is not only accompanied by guilt but also runs the very real risk that one will get caught in an inflation that carries the consequences of the fall. (p. 26)

In Zeus’ eyes, the gift of fire makes man too powerful. “Pandora was to be for men a bane as powerful as fire had been a boon” (Young-Eisendrath, 1997, p. 65). Hephaestus crafts Pandora out of the feminine elements of earth and water and the Olympian gods and goddesses “vied in giving her gifts: Aphrodite gave her beauty and the art of pleasing; the three Graces gave the power of captivating; Apollo gave the talent of singing; Hermes gave her eloquence and deceit; Athena gave rich ornaments and skill in woman’s work; others gave lovely clothes, beautiful flowers, and a crown of gold” (Zimmerman, 1964, p. 191). In some versions of the story Zeus gives her a box, in others, she unearths a jar. In some the jar belongs to her husband, Epimethens, who marries her in spite of his brother’s (Prometheus’) warnings. She opens the jar and releases into the world “all the evils possible for man” (Peck, 1923, p. 1166). “Like Eve in the Garden of Eden, Pandora brings death into the world. She is the instigator of mortality for humans, and she also is the first mortal. Before her presence, all humans were male and immortal. What Pandora brought to those first Greek men was Trouble in the form of division—between male and female, between the immortal gods and the mortal humans” (Young-Eisendrath, 1997, p. 64), between the archetypal masculine and the archetypal feminine. As Young-Eisendrath (1997) argues in Gender & Desire: Uncursing Pandora, Pandora is crafted by the masculine and represents “beauty” as “commodity” (p. 66). “She is said to be beautiful but empty, seductive but untrustworthy, apparently fully human but in fact lacking a heart” (p. 66). These are the very things we might say about the kind of fiction that is crafted solely through technique. As Robert Avens (1980) tells us, “method alone, divorced from psyche, only breeds the delusion of technical omnipotence” (p. 4). Pandora is brought into being as both consequence and counterpart of that double-edged masculine consciousness which Prometheus’ stolen fire represents. While this consciousness gives man the ability to craft civilization, it also inflates. The masculine, by the light of the god’s secret fire, perceives himself as a god. This attitude manifests in several ways, for example, in potentially apocalyptic creative concepts, like genetic
engineering, cloning and atomic energy. It diminishes the feminine into nothing more than a commodity vessel. The jar that Pandora opens contains all the powerful substances that an inflated masculine consciousness will not allow the feminine to possess. It becomes “all the evil of the world” in the subterranean caverns of the unconscious wrought by shadows that the godly fire casts. It becomes our fear of the inner world and the archetypal dimensions that express themselves there.

The myth of Pandora presents the disproportions that arise through an inflated masculine consciousness. It demonstrates the way the feminine is diminished, decked out in the finery of our best techniques, but given no substance. Like all myths, it also contains a solution to the problem. It is Pandora’s curiosity, her desire to know these bottled up dimensions that ultimately give her human significance. From the perspective of man, she has unleashed “all the evils of the world” which now will cause him great suffering and ultimately death. As Jung tells us (1969): “the unconscious is commonly regarded as a sort of encapsulated fragment of our most personal and intimate life—something like what the Bible calls the ‘heart’ and considers the source of all evil thoughts. In the chambers of the heart dwell the wicked blood-spirits, swift anger and sensual weakness. This is how the unconscious looks when seen from the conscious side” (p. 20). Yet we must also see that it is only through human confrontation and engagement with these “evils of the world” that he gains psychological maturity and the symbolic deaths and rebirths necessary for greater consciousness. It is only by surrendering himself to the immortal archetypal powers, as mortal man, that he is able to further human consciousness and, as Jung (1958) points out in \textit{Answer to Job}, bring enlightenment to the gods.

“Elpis” commonly translated as “Hope,” is said to be the remaining substance in Pandora’s jar. It is a curious substance to be swimming in a vat of unspecified evils, yet if we understand it as the only substance that has undergone the scrutiny of analysis and labelling, we are better able to understand the significance of the evils that escaped. The inner dimensions of the psyche, the archetypes, remain living and powerful entities, even when we do not know what they are. As Feinstein and Krippner (1998) write: “if we are unacquainted with the contents...we are carried by it unconsciously” (p. xi). In other words, all the evils of the world, which Pandora releases, are those unconscious patterns that our ignorance empowers. “Pain and suffering and death do exist prior to the birth of consciousness.... [However,] if there is no consciousness to experience them, they do not
exist psychologically" (Edinger, 1972, p. 25). The “hope” that remains in Pandora’s jar may be the hope of re-collecting the archetypes, engaging with them psychologically and assisting their conscious expression. Only by discerning “the evils of the world” as they exist within us and struggling to uncover their totality and significance can we consciously begin to bring transformational energies to bear upon the world and ourselves.

The place where “the practice of art” and the movement of the psyche “overlap” is one of the many places where the unspoken and unspeakable “evils of the world” have fled. Our fears of recognizing psyche, of listening to her voice, and of consciously attempting to assist in her rendering keeps us in the state of control-minded masculine wariness. “[This] consciousness appears to be essentially an affair of the cerebrum, which sees everything separately and in isolation, and therefore sees the unconscious in this way too, regarding it outright as my unconscious” (Jung, 1969, p. 20) with all the ramifications of ownership and control. Russel Lockhart (1982), in his work *Psyche Speaks*, discusses the repercussions of “forgotten psyche.” He says it can be seen in purely behavioural approaches of psychotherapy “where psyche’s voice in symptoms is not heard.” Cutting away what is troubling “may reflect an unarguable humanistic impulse to relieve suffering, but it may cost the individual a rare and unique opportunity to learn the deeper meaning of life” (p. 12). James Hillman (1996) writes:

Hearing it speak may not be easy. How do we recognize its voice; what signals does it give? Before we can address these questions, we need to notice our own deafness, the obstructions that make us hard of hearing: the reductionism, the literalism, the scientism of our so-called common sense. For it is hard to get it through our hard heads that there can be messages from elsewhere more important to the conduct of our lives than what comes through Centel and Internet, meanings that don’t slide in fast, free, and easy, but are encoded particularly in the painful pathologized events that perhaps are the only ways the gods can wake us up. (p. 278)

If, as Creative Writing instructors, we have already become aware of the “forgotten psyche,” the voiceless feminine, and have determined that it is important to remember, acknowledge and validate her in the classroom and workshop, how should this be done and ultimately, what shall we say is our motivation in doing it? Will our motivation have a bearing on our implementation? Should one of our motivations be for the betterment of humanity? Should our motivations be solely for the benefit of our students’ work? Or should we be thinking about our students’ psychological growth and
evolution, which undoubtedly is a component in the creation of meaningful art and life? These questions are just a demonstration of the struggles we may face between archetypal masculine and feminine approaches. The archetypal masculine (which is reflected in the pattern of our consciousness) insists upon labelling, defining, and pinning down, while the archetypal feminine (reflected in the unconscious) is holistic and all-encompassing. Resurrecting the voiceless feminine in Creative Writing opens possibilities for our students that the masculine, technical, craft-conscious approach, alone, cannot. Opening this Pandora’s box, however, will ultimately mean wrestling with projected evils.

Some Creative Writing instructors recognise the gap created by the eclipse of the voiceless feminine, without defining the cause as such. Henry Alley (1979) identifies the importance of students’ accessing internal sources to write and suggests that writing teachers assist students in doing this by having them keep journals. He believes that over the course of a few weeks, if a student “has anything to say,” it will begin to emerge in the journal (p. 14). “The student has to come up with the blueprints, a master plan” (p. 35). Ultimately, Alley advises: “supply the form, not the content” which he admits “may seem simplistic in an area as complex as ours, but it can be a safeguard against the numerous fallacies still weakening our craft as educators” (p. 36). Alley is vague about both the definition and the requirement of the student “having something to say.” Nor does he address the possibility that after writing in a journal for a term, a student still may have nothing to say. He does, however, discern and label this aspect of Creative Writing as “content” (p. 13), which he believes should not come about as the product of writing exercises. “Supply the student with techniques, with varieties of training in the various devices and leave the subjects up to him or her” (p. 13). What he calls “subject” is synonymous with what he calls “content,” an aspect of writing from which, in his opinion, Creative Writing instructors should distance themselves. He makes a distinction between “what can be planned, encouraged, learned and what must be left up to the Muse alone” (p. 5). “Content” appears to be in the jurisdiction of the Muse. He makes specific reference to exercises used by instructors to direct “content.” One, “the photograph exercise,” is when a photograph is shown to students and they are asked to study it and write a description. The other he calls “the most embarrassing assignment,” when students are asked to write about embarrassing moments, family crises, favourite best friends and turning points in their lives (p. 13). In both instances, he believes the results a teacher gets are poor. “The student may not care about [the subject of the photograph]
and may have to call upon every [cliché] image he or she can remember in order to get anything on the page” (p. 13). With the other assignment, the instructor might end up with “a tedious portrait of an impossibly unblemished friend, or a family crisis in which God or a rich uncle intervened” (p. 14). Alley believes that such exercises force the imagination into a narrow margin, and the writer then “undergoes a creative blank,” which produces “tiresome writing” (p. 14). For this reason, he believes such exercises should not be assigned. Although Alley really does not tell us what he means by “content” or “subject”—in the above instance, he seems to be speaking of “theme”—he does put his finger on a very important point. If the student writers are not engaged with their projects, the writing will display this.

Alley is not alone in his desire to avoid dealing with “content”—which we must, by implication, assume he defines as everything that falls beneath the tide line of technique. In technique-driven workshops and classrooms, there is a belief that “content” is the personal substance that students bring to their work and that methods of critical inquiry can too easily bruise students if “content” becomes the focus of discussion (Gaston, personal communication, 17 February 2006). Technique is seen as “objective”—the thing that will make “a science” of Creative Writing (Alley, 1979, p. 5). Everything else becomes indiscriminate “content,” which is “subjective” and must include, besides “theme,” all the unspoken values and dimensions of the writer’s inner world.

The psyche of the writer can clarify as well as cloud creative work. From a Jungian point of view, there are layers of personality, so we might say that the content of our writing also includes perceptions, responses, and illuminations from all layers of our psyche. The inner world of the student is the place where both connections and blind possessions occur. In Alley’s criticisms of the exercises he outlines, we can see that it is only the student’s ego that has taken on the task of the exercises; the exercises have not touched any deeper layers of the psyche. The student gropes for images and ideas that are all too conscious in the collective’s exteriority. These images and ideas, we call “cliché”—and represent things that once emerged fresh from the collective unconscious, spoke in original ways, but now have lost their power of revelation, their ability to engage, transform, or even mildly interest. It is with reference to these images and ideas that Jung, (1969), in a discussion of Christianity, speaks about the “poverty of symbols that is now the condition of our life” (p. 13), and suggests this occurs when we no longer
consider the meaning of symbols. “The gods of Greece and Rome perished from the same disease as did our Christian symbols: people discovered then, as today, that they had no thoughts whatever on the subject” (p. 14). What Alley identifies as a flaw in a particular exercise may actually have more to do with a student being unable to locate the points of engagement between the external and the internal. “Everything that we have not thought about, and that has therefore been deprived of a meaningful connection with our developing consciousness, has got lost” (p. 14). The same could be said of Alley’s second example: those students, who when presented with the task of writing about a family crisis or a best friend, develop stories that demonstrate superficial thinking. Again, such stories appear to be the result of the student writer’s ego assuming a power position in the act of creation, and presenting a simplistic and one-sided representation of an event. How enriched such a story might become if the student were first given some understanding of the depths and internal dimensions of the psyche. For example, an instructor might encourage a discussion about totality and its symbolic representations. The student would soon become conscious that all things are represented as containing their opposites. As Lorrie Moore (1994) writes: “the imagination … forces us inward. It constructs inwardly from what has entered our inwardness. The best art … embraces the very idea of paradox: it sees opposites, antitheses co-existing. It sees the blues and violets, in a painting of an orange” (p. 87). Such a revelation could harness the ego’s discerning faculties in the direction of intellectual exploration. Students may begin to ask questions they never formerly asked. For example: “What are the darker aspects of my best friend’s personality?” They may begin to uncover the unseen side of objects or situations they long believed completely apparent. This new perspective is revelatory and engaging because it connects the writer’s ego to the unknown, presenting possibilities the writer had never entertained. Without the connection of ego to unconscious, the ego alone presents the written record of what has become concretized as the one and only understanding. Writers write only what they know. The life, the fire, the dynamism of an event, object, subject, falls upon the page, heavy and dead, and all the technique in the world cannot resurrect it. This is not the fault of the exercise, but the fault, rather, of a limited ego perspective that moves outwards into the exteriority and brightness of the known world, rather than making a descent into the unknown and fusing a relationship with the unconscious. Certainly, there may be exercises that are better at promoting a co-
operative relationship between ego consciousness and the unconscious, but ultimately, establishing this relationship is essential to engage the writer as well as the reader.

Creative writing instructor and literary magazine editor Ben Nyberg (1994) attempted to understand why some literary stories failed. He broke stories down into conventional divisions of beginning, middle and end and added the fourth division of "pre-story." He considered each of these with reference to "fiction's traditional elements: setting, plot, character and theme," and added as an additional element "Pre-story Lapses in Honesty." Although his entire theoretical framework is based on craft approaches to writing fiction, his conclusions point again and again to failures resulting from the writer's inability to make the ego/unconscious connection. Although the labels he uses are those used in the service of technique approaches—approaches that would eschew "content" as a major consideration, in virtually every instance, the failures he identifies are ones of writers engaging with their "content."

Nyberg begins his study with the classic dogma of a creative writing technician: "By honesty in fiction I mean knowing what one is writing about and writing only about what one knows" (p. 121). No slave to conventional doctrines, however, he acknowledges that there are other ways of knowing than physically and literally experiencing in the external world. "Not all knowledge is life-based," he writes, and even hints at the ego/unconscious dynamic by offering that writers can "learn about their worlds by creating them" (p. 121). Two of the specific failures Nyberg mentions point to a writer's lopsided ego position and the lack of a co-operative encounter with the unconscious. "Setting is sometimes daubed in dutifully but without conviction," he writes, "by writers who seem to know that it's supposed to be useful" (p. 122), and setting is used by the writer "to guide the readers' understanding or interpret the author's message" (p. 123). Although Nyberg does not acknowledge it as such, we can see these failings are a direct result of technique-focused approaches, which inflate a writer's ego and emphasize exteriority ("I need to have a setting, because all the stories that I look at have a setting" or "I have been told that it's necessary that I have a setting"). Ego consciousness is composed of everything that we know, and while we may be in possession of a great deal of knowledge and understanding, our ego consciousness is still very limited when compared to the great stores of potentialities that lie in the unconscious. Technique approaches to creative writing overemphasize the importance of a writer's ego being in control. Writing students heavily influenced by technique
approaches are more likely to believe that they must assert their creative vision upon a
story, that they must directly express their points of view and opinions, and guide the
readers towards their vision. Because there is no acknowledgement of the unconscious in
technique approaches, the thought that the unconscious might have something to say
through the story—something which might be at odds with the writer's ego—is never
considered.

In Nyberg's category of failure in character, we find the same to be true.
"Characters are sometimes forced into unnatural behaviour by writers who are out to
prove a point, take revenge, or just vent frustrations" (p. 125). The overpowering ego
asserts its position, its limited vision, and its one-sidedness, without consideration of the
presence or intentions of the unconscious. Characters also fail when they are "cardboard
cutouts" (p. 123). Nyberg tells us that "such unconvincing characters are usually a result
of thinking in generic rather than specific terms." The writer's ego accepts an exteriorized
collective image without discernment. Technique approaches to Creative Writing that
emphasize objectivity, externality and ego do not give student writers the subjective
understanding or the internal tools to even identify cliché images, let alone deal with
them. The eye that sees and renders the cliché is the eye of a concretized ego
consciousness.

In both plot and theme categories as well, Nyberg cites failures that stem from the
writer's concretized ego assertions. He writes: "plots can also be 'well-made' to the point
of dishonesty" and adds, in the true voice of a technician: "to be sure, fiction is artifice,
and all storylines are accordingly conjectural narrative schemes" (p. 128). Even as he
avows the dogma of the technician, however, he cannot help but recognize its failings.
When the ego determines the story, without input from the unconscious, "schemes are so
rigid they turn characters into marbles rolling and bumping their way along a set of pre-
cut grooves so deep nobody could conceivably get off track" (p. 128). Thematically, it is
the writers who work "too hard at making their intended statements clear and emphatic"
who "lose their grip on the dramatic illusion necessary to sustain their case. In their desire
to spell things out so unambiguously no reader will mistake them, they may be tempted to
thrust a more-or-less explicit message into the story's text" (p. 130).

The technique approach to Creative Writing preaches the gospel of the all-
powerful ego-creator. It teaches the student writer that the appropriate stance to take
towards creation is domination. By not regarding the act of writing as a cooperative
interplay between ego and unconscious, by stressing that it is the writer's vision and intention that is paramount, the technique approach inculcates the very failings it condemns. The only way we can begin to address these failings is by acknowledging the ego's partner in creation, the unconscious.

One approach to writing instruction that does (either directly or indirectly) acknowledge the unconscious in writing practice is the methodology known as "Process Pedagogy." Over the last few decades, this form of writing instruction has come forward as an alternative to standard pedagogical "product" approaches, particularly in composition studies. Lad Tobin (2001) in his article "Process Pedagogy" dates the beginning of this movement as early as the mid-sixties (p. 9). Educators and authors such as Donald Murray and Peter Elbow are known for their contributions to its development. "It was the version of process that emphasized freewriting, voice, personal narrative, and writing as a form of discovery ... that had the greatest influence on classroom practice ... (p. 9). "Freewriting," or the act of continuous stream of consciousness writing, according to Peter Elbow (1981), assists the writer in "focusing ... energy while at the same time putting aside... [a] conscious controlling self. It gives practice in this special mode of focusing-but-not-trying: it lets [the writer] stand out of the way and let words be chosen by the sequence of the words themselves or the thought, not by the conscious self. In this way, freewriting gradually puts a deeper resonance or voice into [one’s] writing" (p. 16).

The unconscious and the archetypal feminine are celebrated by the process approach, while the ego and the archetypal masculine are considered, if at all, to be important, only after the fact. To proponents of the process approach, the ego and the archetypal masculine, come specifically to embody the "censor" or "critic." We find this attitude in popular authors such as Natalie Goldberg and Julia Cameron. They have extolled the virtues of the process approach to writing. They believe that the approach assists writers in breaking through writers' block, silencing the inner critic, and finding a larger understanding.

Julia Cameron (1992) conceives of the binary of "Logic Brain" (what we have outlined as the archetypally masculine ego's way) which "is our brain of choice in the Western Hemisphere" and the "Artist Brain" (the way of the archetypal feminine unconscious). She sees "Logic brain" as "our Censor" that "perceives the world according to known categories. ... Anything unknown is perceived as wrong and possibly dangerous." While "Artist Brain" is "creative" and "holistic," it "thinks in patterns and
shadings. It makes new connections, yoking together images to invoke meaning.” She sees it as “our inventor, our child” (p. 13). Natalie Goldberg (1990) also invokes positive and negative binaries, envisioning the “editor” in her work *Wild Mind* as a moralistic authority figure who attempts to prevent “the writer” from writing her truth (p. 2). For those who embrace the process approach, the archetypal masculine as he manifests in writing may carry all of the personal failings of an overly strict father, all of the destructive projections of the patriarchy and all of the negative judgements of the Old Testament God. Many who subscribe to the process approach to writing believe there is no creative place for the archetypal masculine in writing. Others suggest his place “as critic” should follow, not engage with, creation. This misalignment of masculine and feminine principles in our culture and society is reflected in our approaches to the practice and teaching of Creative Writing. The process approach is no better at encouraging a cooperative encounter between ego and unconscious. Just as the technique approach fails because it puts the ego in a position of dominance, so also the process approach fails because it subordinates the ego. In the Western world, we still live in and with a collective consciousness that digests one experience at a time, which sees the model of hierarchy, even in egalitarian movements, and insists on one god. By working to find a place of equal and cooperative partnerships between masculine and feminine in writing pedagogy, we move against our fixed collective understandings and into the dynamic, evolving place of emerging consciousness. Being able to discern the ego from the unconscious and understand the constructive and necessary roles each plays in the creation of art might be a starting place in a new post-process pedagogy of Creative Writing that acknowledges a co-operative approach between the two.
Amplification and Image

Chapter Two

The archetypal image expressed can appear as "a visible sign of an invisible reality" (Kast, 1992, p. 10). As such, "the external can reveal the internal ... and the physical the spiritual....When we interpret [images], we seek the invisible reality behind the visible and the connections between the two" (p. 10). When we ask students to render images in their writing, we also hope they will convey these two levels of meaning, but their success in doing so depends a great deal on the approach they are taught to take.

In the previous chapter it was shown how some writers have attempted to assert the concept of archetype, specifically "the hero's quest," as a device for the creation of character and plot structure. The view was expressed that this technical approach reduces the inherent expansive and transformational quality of these patterns. In this chapter, a specific approach to the archetypal image will be explored, one that could benefit student writers by encouraging conscious interaction between the ego and the unconscious. This approach is based on the Jungian method of "amplification" and works in harmony with the image's resonance, assisting in both its expansion and expression.

At the outset, it will be useful to consider the distinction James Hillman (1983) makes in Healing Fiction: "The act of painting the image or speaking with it in a poem is dulia, a service to the image" This stands in contrast to "latria," which is the reducing of an image to a single object or meaning (p. 73). To serve an image in fiction, one must begin with an open mind, allowing the image, like a lump of clay on a potter's wheel, to extend and collapse, to transform into many configurations for even when symbols arise spontaneously and organically from the unconscious, if our ego attempts a premature interpretation, we risk losing the symbol's resonance. As James Hollis (2000) writes, "by encapsulating the mystery, we lose it entirely. This is the terrible temptation of literalist fundamentalism of all kinds. When the temptation triumphs, the images that arise out of primal experience, phenomenological in character, are subordinated to the needs of consciousness and thus become artefacts of ego rather than intimations of eternity" (p. 5).

Because preconceived notions of what an image will or should become tend to erase the spontaneity and reduce an image to allegory, writing students can learn how to serve an image by allowing their imaginations and unconscious to guide their response to it. In analytical psychology there is a technique called "amplification." This technique
amplifies unconscious content, such as dream motifs or fantasy figures, by the personal and/or collective associations one aligns with it (Hall, 1986, pp. 95-99).

To demonstrate this technique, as an exercise, I drew on my unconscious for an appropriate image, and the picture of a stalking leopard appeared in my mind’s eye. While I could have simply begun amplifying this image, and most probably would have done under other circumstances, I determined to consciously frame the amplification by the larger thematic concern of this thesis, the voiceless feminine. I resolved to do this by considering symbolic representations of the motif, such as voiceless and/or silent female characters. By consciously considering silent or silenced females in relation to the leopard, I was both narrowing the field of potential associations, while using ego consciousness to direct the area of investigation. The product, besides demonstrating uses of amplification in fiction, should also enhance our understanding of the voiceless feminine.

I turned first to collective associations, texts in which leopards were strongly linked to “voiceless” or “silent” girls or women. The first text I looked at was The Son of Tarzan, by Edgar Rice Burroughs (1915), in which Meriem, an abducted child princess, is saved by Korak, the son of Tarzan. Meriem is linked to the leopard as a passive witness of its destructive and devouring capabilities. She demonstrates the specific kind of “silence” that is required of a girl who does not speak the language of the apes. And later, as she learns the language, she also “learn[s] the fine art of silence, when silence [is] desirable” (p. 81). The second text I considered was a short story “Eyes of the Leopard,” by John B. Rosenman (2004). An artist, Amadi paints various jungle animals on the body of the story’s female protagonist, Ekwefi. Later, Amadi learns of a rash of deaths in the village caused by several of the animals he depicted there. He is in love with her, but questions the sincerity of her affection for him. When she seduces him, he discovers that the only painted animal remaining on her body is a leopard, a creature she proceeds to turn into. Amadi, fearing for his life, mortally wounds the leopard Ekwefi, who instead of trying to kill him in her death throes proves the silenced sincerity of her affection by extending her tongue and licking his cheek. Lastly, I looked at three “leopard” poems by Emily Dickinson (1998).

With thee, in the Desert (201)
With thee, in the Desert —
With thee in the thirst —
With thee in the Tamarind wood —
Leopard breathes — at last! (p. 233).

Blazing in Gold and quenching in Purple (321)
Blazing in Gold and quenching in Purple
Leaping like Leopards to the Sky
Then at the feet of the old Horizon
Laying her spotted Face to die
Stooping as low as the Otter's Window
Touching the Roof and tinting the Barn
Kissing her Bonnet to the Meadow
And the Juggler of Day is gone (p. 338).

Civilization—spurns—the Leopard! (276)
Civilization — spurns — the Leopard!
Was the Leopard — bold?
Deserts — never rebuked her Satin —
Ethiop — her Gold —
Tawny — her Customs —
She was Conscious —
Spotted — her Dun Gown —
This was the Leopard's nature — Signor —
Need — a keeper — frowned?

Pity — the Pard — that left her Asia —
Memories — of Palm —
Cannot be stifled — with Narcotic —
Nor suppressed — with Balm — (p. 293).

Details gathered from biographies on the poet's life (Farr, 1992; Habegar, 2001; Jenkins, 1930) suggest Emily Dickinson was a shy, yet strongly passionate and sensual woman who could not bring herself to accept blindly the religious, social, moral, or aesthetic conventions of her day. She chose a self-imposed silence, an exile of seclusion, where her lack of leopard camouflage could not be detected, and where the "inappropriate" thoughts and feelings that stalked her could find expression, often cryptic, in her writing.

It is important to point out that by asking students to amplify collective or cultural associations as a creative writing technique, they should not be consciously extracting or importing details from sources outside of themselves. Rather, they should be allowing the details of these external narratives to work upon their unconscious and inform the
imaginal dimensions of their work. How these external sources, once amplified, will influence the shape of a given piece of writing will, of course, depend upon a number of personal and ultimately indefinable considerations. What is important in the process of amplification for the student writer is not the definable outcome, but rather the richness of the source they will be creating from.

In analytical psychology, amplification works to expand and enlarge the dimensions of one’s perception (Hall, 1986, pp. 95-99). The object is not to pinpoint or decisively conclude anything but to engage in a creative exploration, allowing the image to remain ineffable while one’s “primal” or “instinctual” understanding of an image is deepened. As James Hollis (2000) reminds us, “human experience does not always give rise immediately to ideas. It can be reflected in images ... without the mediation of ideas. Man reacted inwardly to his experience before he became a thinker” (p. 26). In creative writing, students are often advised, “show, don’t tell.” This dogma, stemming from the knowledge that a picture, something ineffable something one can not decisively put one’s finger on or reduce to singularity without loss of meaning, is always more powerful than any other mode of rendering. The fictional device of narration is often, wrongly, given short shrift, in the misguided belief that on its own it can never convey a picture’s inexpressible complexity. Both the creative writer and the practitioner of analytical psychology are dealing with similar issues. Both understand the importance of a non-intellectualized, instinctive understanding, whereas a picture is digested with a wholeness and immediacy that transcend conventional rational translation and explanation. For the practitioner of analytical psychology, such a pure experience is seen as psychically healing (Hillman, 1983). For the creative writing student, such a pure experience is a necessary stage in creating art with the power to transform. What Jungian psychology discourages and what the spirit of a literature abhors is a tendency to strip an image of its organic complexity by neatly pinning and labelling it under a glass dome of critical certainty. In the story that follows, for example, one might say, “the leopard is Cheryl’s instinctual energy,” or “the leopard is Cheryl’s creativity,” or “the leopard is the art therapist’s repressed sexuality.” Pinning the leopard to any of these symbolic representations would not serve the image of the leopard, which is amorphous and multi-dimensional. In creative writing, such heavy-handed intellectualizing on the part of a narrator would be considered a most blatant form of “telling” and in most instances would not be tolerated.
From the perspective of analytical psychology, the equating of an image with a "this and/or that" is not desirable either, yet analytical psychology would explain the problem through an examination of ego perception and consciousness. In analytical psychology, the ego, as discussed in the Chapter Three, can be considered as that structural element of the personality that considers itself "I." Everything that "I" know about myself and the world around me is my ego's knowledge. What my ego does not readily know is that there is a far greater part of me that contains infinitely more content than "I" can ever possibly be aware of, and that this "unconscious content," called "the self," has far greater control over me and my destiny than my comparatively puny ego's will. My naive ego tends to believe in its own omnipotence in my life, believing it can plan and dictate my life's narrative, until such a time as it finds itself suddenly ineffectual in the grip of some unplanned or unseen struggle. Falling in love, for example, can be just such an opposing force, one that awakens the ego to the fact of its inherent smallness (Hollis, 1998, p. 45).

In approaches to Creative Writing, particularly at the high school level, where many students are taught to "outline" meticulous story plans, construct plot graphs and the like, the power of creation is invested solely in the ego. Students learn that the ego, with its limited vision, is what neatly plans and unfolds a story. The entire universe of "self" becomes consciously inaccessible when one has set a linear ego-driven path for a story, and in this way major reductions in writing occur, in which rich images become stripped of their husks, and the larger, richer story that emerges beyond the ego's vision is sacrificed. Still, one can not reduce the force of the "self," even in the creation of stories, for the self will attempt to be seen. Yet the tendency to laud the role of "ego" and ignore the impact of "self" leads to the marginalization of creative energy and missed opportunities: if in the writing of our well-planned story something should emerge from the unconscious we had not planned upon, we are faced with an obstacle, as opposed to a possibility. Teaching students how to play host to the unknown in their writing, and how to allow their egos to engage in a dialogue with and an exploration of the unconscious, enriches both a work of Creative Writing and the writing process. The following story is the product of my amplifications. Because I have not consciously defined the image of
the leopard in the story, but allowed myself to explore it, by the story's end I have a far
greater familiarity with the life, range, and potential of the image; yet it would be
impossible to articulate all of its nuances.
The Art Therapist and the Leopard

Into this place of darkness, the night, this corridor, rolling like a leopard’s shadow, a streak, through the jungle, light pouring spotted patterns through the leaves. Cheryl has descended from the pulp of Ekwefi, and Ekwefi has been translated from the maw of Meriem; Meriem has sprung from the pen and poems of Emily.

From mother to daughter, this inheritance of scattered light, though Cheryl knows nothing of the others or of the jungle and the leopards who live there, only what she’s seen in her sister’s books—square solid windows siphoned from her sister’s shelves, opening to fall through, her body rocking.

Kitty fiddles with gold hoop earrings. “Why does that tard always get to come into my room!”

And the woman who is setting out the tea things says nothing, but makes the china cups sing like bells.

“It’s not like she can read!” Kitty shouts, the golden posts prodding the thin rips of pierced flesh. “Can’t she go rock back and forth someplace else?”

Kitty has a boyfriend now. He pulls up in the driveway and honks his horn. Her hand presses all the way along the curves of her sweater, just as if it’s a tongue smoothing her, as if she were a spotted leopard, readying herself to leap, and then she is gone, the echo of a door, the growl of an engine.
The dappled paint of light showers the man's smiling face at the end of the corridor. It is because Kitty has a boyfriend now, because Cheryl did something wrong, that everything has had to change.

This man is tall, taller than any man she's ever seen, and his chest is as wide as a sky. When he speaks, his voice explodes, the boom of a bomb in a deep well, and his hands are so big that her eyes can only take them in, one finger at a time.

"Where are we, today, Cheryl?" he asks. "Any places I can visit with you?"

They are absurd questions, because he knows she cannot speak, but she likes the sound of them. She likes the sound of his big black chair and the creak of the other chair he pulls up. He lets her spin in this one, around and around, like a pony on a pole at the carnival.

"Do you feel like drawing?" he asks after a little while, and she knows in his desk there are swathes of manila paper and boxes of brand new crayons all with their colourful witch's hats still intact. She imagines each crayon a sorceress and silently reads their names—periwinkle blue, salmon pink, copper maroon; she marks the pages with their conversations and draws a leopard and jungle fronds in the wide corners.

"You're an artist," the giant man says. His voice has become visible now, it moves in convex waves through the air, his breath smells like bay berries, his flesh does as well. "I like this beautiful leopard." He touches the waxy chestnut spots.
She knows his eyes are watching her, that he wants to see how she will take the compliment. Two of the colourful witches discuss it: “He wants to see what she’ll do,” one says in a solid streak of brick red.

“He wants to see if she hears him,” says the other, an arc of yellow flaring across the page. “She’s pretending not to.”

These two sorceresses go back in their box and another two emerge.

“He is trying to trick her,” whispers the burnt umber in a faint line. “He is trying to make her talk.”

“She likes him,” the magenta spirals crazily. “Would it be really bad if she spoke?”

The manila page shakes under Cheryl’s fists. The two sorceresses have made cyclones that will swallow everything away.

“Stop,” the man says, “let the leopard be.” His large hands glide through the air like birds. They land on her hands and her body jolts, just as if she has received an electrical shock.

I didn’t mean to scare you,” he says. Her face is imprinted with betrayal. “I just wanted to look at the leopard a little longer.”

He takes the paper away from her. He holds it up into the air. “Why do you suppose a leopard would want to crawl way up there?” After several minutes of contemplation, he lowers the paper. “I want to keep this leopard, if that’s all right with you. I’m going to hang him on my wall, right here.” He retrieves some tape from his desk, and with four neatly torn portions sticks the scribbled paper on his wall. “I wonder, leopard,
why you hide way up there?" he says. This time he addresses the picture directly.

Cheryl swivels and swivels in her chair. She closes her eyes. She feels light and shadow dance over her face.

"Do you want to draw another picture?" the man asks. But Cheryl ignores the paper he produces, she ignores the pretty box of screaming witches on his desk. "Come colour," they are shrieking, and their voices are frighteningly desperate, but she ignores them and continues spinning, until when she opens her eyes, there is just a blur of the world going round and round, and the man is nothing more than a fuzzy stain, and her stomach is churning like a jagged ocean.

"We'll meet again in a week, Cheryl," the man says. "I'll get to know your leopard in that time, and when you come back I'll tell you everything he's said to me, and maybe you can draw him a friend so he won't have to hang up there all by himself." The man's large arm brushes Cheryl's back. It feels like a needle probing the cartilage of her spine. She stares at the leopard stuck upon the man's wall, and wishes her hand had not drawn it. "Bad hand, bad hand," she thinks on the way home, but her hand is not cowed. Her hand makes it clear it will draw again. It will draw whatever it wants.

It is dark, but the streetlight illuminates their silhouettes, moving together and apart like two snakes, becoming one, then two again. Kitty and her boyfriend are in a parked car outside of the house.
Cheryl watches from her bedroom window. She sees the moon is buried between the branches of an oak, and that right beneath this grave, her sister Kitty and a boy are twisting and twining. The car rocks back and forth, and Cheryl’s bad hand follows this motion. It wiggles in the air like a snake. It flaps and thumps on the sill of her window like a heavy bat. It exposes a long bright red scar. Lower and lower the bad hand moves, down until it reaches the midriff of her nightdress.

The wicked hand lifts then fans her skirt, crawls under it, tears at the elastic of her pink Monday underpants, and claws at the few curls of new hair it finds there. “I can do anything I want to do,” the hand is thumping like a heart. “I can push things inside of you and I can take things out of you.” It growls like a leopard and then it falls asleep.

It is September. The night is hot. The car door slams, the engine starts, quick feet advance up the driveway, but Cheryl isn’t disturbed by either of these. It is only Kitty’s hot red face she fears will wake the sleeping leopard.

Downstairs, the cloud of words drifts up and through the house:
“You shame me,” a woman’s voice is saying.

“/shame you?” Kitty’s voice asks.

The colours of the words merge and multiply, swirl like cyclones through the ceiling. “Cheryl,” her name whipping into a grey locket of breath.
She knows it is because of her that Kitty won’t bring her boyfriend in. But it isn’t really her. It isn’t her. It is her hand...the bad hand...and the sleeping leopard who possesses it.

“All you have to do is make sure you lock things away,” the woman is saying.

“I’ll make sure I leave a knife right outside of her bedroom door!” Kitty hisses.

“I never thought you could be so cruel,” the woman whispers.

When Cheryl sees the man next, she worries that the leopard may have said something. But the man is just as nice. He pulls the big black chair that rocks and swivels right next to his, and pats the seat where he wants her to sit.

“Your leopard is a very loyal creature,” he tells her. “He wouldn’t say a word to me all week, no matter how much I bribed him. Would you like a cookie?” he asks, in the same breath.

Cheryl’s hand moves forward.

“Your leopard didn’t seem to fancy these.” He puts a cookie into Cheryl’s hand, then takes one himself. “I wonder if it’s just that leopards don’t like chocolate.”

Cheryl swivels around and around on the chair as crumbs of chocolate scatter from the cookie and the corners of her mouth. Around and around, as the room dissolves to grey, and the swivelling suddenly comes to a halt. It was a knee, the man’s knee, that stopped her.
"Will you colour another picture for me today, Cheryl?" he asks. His knee is touching her knee and she feels the breath from her lungs evaporate. He produces a sheet of manila paper and a box of crayons without moving his leg. He pulls her chair a little closer to his. Cheryl tries to push her chair away, but her strong legs have suddenly turned weak.

"Will you do another leopard?" the man encourages. "Then our friend on the wall will have someone to talk to."

Cheryl feels her knee shake. She feels the trembling move from her knee, up to her thigh and into her stomach. She wants to pull her knee away from the man's, but it seems to be stuck there. The man reaches into the crayon box. He hands her the same chestnut brown crayon she has used to draw the last leopard. Her hand takes the crayon, and the little chestnut sorceress whose hat has already begun to flatten, immediately begins to wail.

"I can do anything I want to do," the bad hand tells the sorceress as he presses her on the page, and grinds her dwindling cap to nothing.

Another leopard forms through the shrieks and waxy flakes, through the curls of crayon wrapping, just as if its body were devouring the little chestnut witch. Cheryl's hand tears at the paper wrapping around the crayon, the crayon breaks in half.

"This leopard is so much bigger than the last," the man observes. He sounds satisfied, and at last Cheryl draws her knee away.
That night she dreams the man is holding her on his lap, that he is guiding her hand with his hand. She doesn’t struggle to get free of him. She likes sitting with him in this way, but then the little chestnut sorceress starts scolding, “Stand up at once!” Her words bounce like fork lightning all over the page.

It isn’t as if Cheryl is doing anything wrong, but the nasty little sorceress makes it seem as if she is. “You shame me,” the chestnut witch howls in a furious circle. “You shame us all!” The crayon box on the man’s desk trembles. Hundreds of accusing witch eyes peek at Cheryl from beneath their colourful conical hats.

“Get off that man’s lap right away!” The chestnut line swirls and dashes and ricochets into the corners of the paper, wildly and out of control, in spite of Cheryl, in spite of the man’s careful guiding hand.

It is the eyes of the colourful sorceresses that wake her. They are staring through the shade of dark ferns and jungle foliage that the trees outside create on her bedroom walls, and then they are not the sorceresses’ eyes, but the spotted eyes of leopards, circling the walls, slinking in an underbrush of shadow, trying to camouflage their devouring intentions in the wooden skirting board’s immaculate grain.

She pulls the bed sheet over her head. Surrounded by leopards, she is afraid to even breathe. There is no telling what they might do. If they will attack or if, instead, they will grow tired pacing the paint work and fall asleep. Sweat collects in the folds of her nightgown and she hears the quick beat of her heart banging like a cymbal in her ears.
“I can push things inside of you, and I can take things out of you.”
The weight and outline of a leopard are visible on the sheet above her.
She closes her eyes so tightly that they sting. Her exhalation is no more
than a single feather’s breath.

How she wishes she were safe with the man, eating chocolate
cookies, spinning on his black chair. He would take the leopard, and hang
it on his wall, where it would remain still and mute, muffled by self-
consciousness. The man is big, like a giant, with a very loud voice. He’s
dealt with leopards before. She knows by the way he spoke to hers. He
didn’t seem afraid at all.

She curls into a small hot ball under the bed sheets, and tires to
imagine herself sitting beside him in the swivelling chair. Just thinking of
him makes her feel a little easier. She imagines his breath, and his large
hand resting against her back. She crawls onto his lap, and sits exactly
where she has in her dream. Here, she feels safe enough to sleep until
morning. With the first rays of sun, the leopards grow dull and vanish
into the walls. All day long Cheryl holds the safe warmth of the man
around her and when she ventures into Kitty’s room to look at books,
Kitty demands to know why she is smiling. It isn’t that she expects an
answer—she knows Cheryl won’t speak.

Cheryl’s hands rise together in a triangle and touch her mouth. Her
fingers follow the curves of her lips. She wonders if she has become so
visible that Kitty can see the man she clings to.
"You look like the cat who swallowed the canary!" Kitty says as she smears pink lip-gloss over her own lips, feeling generous, knowing that her boyfriend will be calling for her soon.

The next time Cheryl sees the man, he sets out five circles of paint: bright blue and sunny yellow, a red that looks like blood, white and black for tinting and shading and a plastic pallet for mixing colours. Beside the pallet, a jar of clear water stands in which three brushes of varying widths await her.

The two leopards that hang on the wall beside the man are pretending to be statues, but Cheryl senses their restlessness. They do not like the thought of a leopard different from themselves, and the shrieks of the colourful witches that emanate from the man's desk drawer make it plain they do not like the idea either. Still, Cheryl feels safe next to the man, and lifts the thickest of the three brushes. She places it first in one colour, then another, and then into the pallet, until the pallet contains the richest and most varied browns and golden browns that Cheryl has ever seen.

The man doesn't ask her to paint a leopard, yet she knows this is what he hopes. The brush slips and slithers across the page, it twists and twirls in her hand. She knows the man is watching her. Neither the din of wailing witches, nor the covert tail swish of the disapproving leopards frighten her from her task. When she is with the man, she is fearless. She imagines the animal she is rendering, divining and stalking its quarry.
under a canopy of speckled trees and thinks of her own pursuit, searching out this leopard in the nap of paper.

She thinks of Kitty and the boy, how the three of them once sat at the dining room table where she was cutting chains and chains of paper dolls from construction paper.

"What's this?" Kitty asked the boy, holding up a plain white sheet.

"Paper," the boy said.

"No," Kitty responded. "It's a polar bear in a snow storm."

The boy grinned.

"What's this?" Kitty asked, holding up a sheet of black paper.

"I give up," said the boy, not having tried at all.

"It's a black cat falling into a black mood at midnight."

Cheryl snipped and snipped with sharp scissors, and pulled the paper open like an accordion. An entire rainbow of dolls stretched out across the table. "Sisters," Cheryl thought.

Kitty continued holding up the coloured paper sheets, her jokes becoming increasingly silly; but Cheryl can not remember what happened after that. She can't remember what she did, if she stuck all the different coloured dolls together with glue, or if she left them separate, lonely in their own brilliance. She can't remember what happened to the dolls afterwards, what became of the paper and the scissors or the grinning boy. She can't remember what her bad hand was thinking about or if the leopards even existed then.
The leopard Cheryl is painting now is threatening to become larger than the page. It growls a little, snuffles, opens its claws and scrapes against the hard black surface of the man’s desk.

“This leopard needs more paper,” the man says, extending another manila sheet, reaching over her, breath touching the back of her neck. He tucks and tapes the paper gently to the other sheet.

The screams of the little witches expire in the drawer. The leopards on the wall begin to tremble. Cheryl’s coarse paintbrush kisses the plastic pallet, and in the body of the leopard she begins to expose circles of gold.

“I am made of treasure,” the leopard tells her. “Look at my golden spots.”

The golden spots of the leopard stare out at her.

“Did you know your beautiful spots are just like eyes, leopard?” the man asks.

“I see everything,” the leopard whispers.

Cheryl thinks of the man all week. She hears his voice in her head, and when she closes her eyes sees him speaking with her painted leopard. When she dreams, the man is there, guiding her hand over a page through great sharp blades of forest green into the shadows of her wall, through the fur of a leopard.

“I can push things into you and take things out of you,” the leopard growls, “and I have pushed this man so far into you, that you will never get him out.”
Cheryl’s head throbs, a knot settles in her stomach; when she wakes she feels sick.

At breakfast, when Cheryl doesn’t eat, Kitty comments that she must be in love.

“Stop upsetting her,” the woman mutters.

A cyclone of words swirl about the kitchen table, but Cheryl pays no attention. She is listening to the leopard as the man’s large arms close around her like an invisible spotted cloak.

When she sees the man, she knows right away that he has spoken to the painted leopard—that the painted leopard has offered her up, like a space to fill, or a canvas to sketch upon. She looks into the man’s eyes and for a moment sees a flash of gold there and the tip of a leopard’s tail, grazing out of sight.

For the first time, the man does not encourage her eyes. He looks down at his desk, at the paints and brushes he has so meticulously arranged, while the little sorceresses begin wailing from the darkness of his drawers.

“Your painted leopard and I had a long conversation this week,” the man confesses. His eyes are still fixed on the long flat surface of his desk, on the art supplies, and the clear water. “He’s such an expressive creature. Just look at his spots.” Cheryl looks at her painted leopard. The gold inside the leopard’s body sparkles like a million stars. She sees the curve of his body shift and the gentle kneading of his claws. For a
moment, she is afraid of what has transpired, of what has been exposed, but the painted leopard has held something back.

The man’s large hand comes to rest on her shoulder, and Cheryl slides her black chair close to his. In this proximity, warmth dissolves fear, and in this easy comfort Cheryl wonders what the man would do if she crawled upon his lap.

In an instant, she is there, and the man is sitting very still. His breath is nervous on her neck, but he says nothing, allowing her to lift the brushes from the water and mix golden chestnut colours on her pallet.

He doesn’t speak to her as she works, he doesn’t disturb her in any way, and her hand, the bad hand, streaks the widest paintbrush over the page and high, high up, into the paper’s corners.

This leopard she is creating is for the man. He hasn’t asked for it, but she wants to give it to him. “I can push things into you and I can take things out of you,” she thinks she hears the leopard saying. But she is not sure if it is the leopard speaking or if it’s the man, for both of them now have the booming voices of giants, and it feels to her as if this leopard is being extracted from her fingers like drops of blood.

Afterwards, the man allows her on his lap each week. He lets her crawl upon him, push and rub her back against his chest and feel his heart and breath moving in the cage of her body. She knows if she spoke, he would tell her to say nothing. He would want her to keep this to herself, for although she feels perfectly content on his lap, there are
others, like the colourful sorceresses in his desk drawers, Kitty and the woman, who would say this was wrong and bad and stop her from seeing the man ever again.

Sometimes she will turn and let her cheek brush against his shoulder, and then lean way, way up, to touch his face with the tip of her tongue. He tastes of leaves and wild lavender and salt, and his whiskers soften under the warm care of her mouth. When she does this, he sits perfectly still, like the smaller crayoned leopards on his wall, pretending not to notice, and later she herself grows still, waiting for his observations, for his eyes that see inside her leopard's spots and divine from them a path.

He tells the leopards about pretension and appearance, he tells them how important it is that they always find a way to vanish and blend in. She does not always understand why he says the things he does, but takes them away with her as she does the taste of his flesh, to hold them in the jungle of her thoughts, carry them forward through her shadowed bedroom walls and backwards in time, where she prowls the invisible brilliance of all the stalking silence she has ever had to become.
Man struggles with his inborn needs and fulfillment. New unfoldings struggle up in torment in him, as buds struggle forth from the midst of a plant. Any man of real individuality tries to know and to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along. This struggle for verbal consciousness should not be left out in art. It is a very great part of life. It is not superimposition of a theory. It is a passionate struggle into conscious being. (D.H. Lawrence, 1950, p. viii)

Jung’s psychological theories were at one and the same time disarmingly simple yet also dauntingly profound. He believed that people are naturally propelled towards wholeness, that we exist in a constant state of becoming who we are, and that all things we do in life (and indeed, all things life does to us) are attempts to facilitate this process. When this process is conscious, it is called “individuation.” Jungian analysts seek to assist the course of “individuation” by having analysands acknowledge and relate to the unconscious. Stein (1982) writes that analysis assists the analysand in “establishing a more vital and aware relationship” between the unconscious and consciousness (p. 36). Besides a “host of small adjustments of ego-attitude that take place in analysis” there are also “deep changes” (p. 39). One of these deep changes is perceptual. Once the analysand’s ego is aware of the unconscious, it no longer can see itself as the controlling centre of the analysand’s life, but must relocate this function in relation to the emerging “Self.” As Hall (1986) puts it, “in individuation the center of the personality moves from the ego toward the Self, establishing a new center of the psyche somewhere between the two” (p. 42). Jung saw the “Self” as “[an] archetypal image of man’s fullest potential and the unity of the personality as a whole” (Samuels, Shorter, Plaut, 1986, p. 135). It is experienced by consciousness “as a transpersonal power which transcends the ego” (Hall, 1983, p. 121), and embraces both conscious and unconscious.

For the writing student, the perceptual shift that occurs in discovering this larger entity as the nucleus of creation can be extremely beneficial. Not only is the student’s ego freed from the impossible responsibility of generating stories and the debilitating anxiety that sometimes surrounds it, but also the approach she will then take to her writing becomes consciously relational. She strives then not to “create” but rather to attune herself to the expression of the unconscious, to establish, as Stein (1982) characterizes it,
a “fluidity” between the ego and unconscious (p. 39). According to Stein, this flow in analysis “brings with it an influx of energy and vitality...” as well as “more creativity” (p. 31). “There seems to be a continual give and take. The conscious cannot write without inspiration from the unconscious, the unconscious cannot formulate in a bearable form without the help of the conscious” (Hannah, 1971, p.. 215).

In this chapter, I propose the concept of a “literary individuation,” demonstrating how Jung’s ideas about the individuating psyche can be utilized by students in the context of Creative Writing. Besides presenting practical ways instructors can assist students in experiencing the larger entity of the “Self” while de-emphasizing the ego’s role in creation, I also seek to show how this expanse of consciousness can lead to greater psychological depth and maturation in the student writer, both important considerations in the production of meaningful writing. Like Jungian analysts, Creative Writing instructors can learn ways of assisting students in observing and reflecting upon their inner worlds—ways that will enhance their natural literary unfolding and will lead to greater creativity and the ability to produce deeper, richer writing.

Analysts, like writers, must train themselves to work with elements in the psyche that are often simultaneously grubby and alluring, or even alluring in their very grubbiness, without surrendering to them. Analysts, like writers with their characters, must allow their patients full freedom with their qualities, grubby or alluring or whatever. Nothing should be allowed to interfere with patients’ conversations, whether with their analysts or with themselves. The analyst must accompany a patient’s psyche where ever it leads, no matter where, observing, understanding, feeling, but neither joining in nor standing aside from the disagreeable. Analysts must recognise what a range of human nature they must deal with, just as writers must.” (Ulanov & Ulanov, 1994, pp. 256-257)

The process of literary individualization will be more effective if student writers understand what is involved, and as a first stage it will be helpful for them to become familiar with specific Jungian terms and methods, and to learn how these can be applied directly to their writing.
Towards the Concept of a “Literary Individuation”

The Ego

A good starting place might be with an understanding of Jung’s concept of the ego. Jung (1969) saw the ego “as the complex factor to which all conscious contents are related” (p. 3). “It forms, as it were, the centre of the field of consciousness; and, in so far as this comprises the empirical personality, the ego is the subject of all personal acts of consciousness” (p. 3). The Creative Writing instructor might explain the ego, then, as that part of us that we identify as us—the part of me that I identify as “I.” In the process of individuation, the ego must first accumulate “ego strength,” which can be achieved through increasing consciousness. The act of writing itself, when exploratory, can promote ego strength. As the student writes, she may uncover facts and perspectives of which she was previously unaware. As her consciousness increases, so will her ego strength. As ego strength increases, she will find a more fluid connection forms with the unconscious, and as this occurs, the greater access she will have to the larger unexplored dimensions of her psyche. Stephen Minot (1993) points out in *Three Genres: The Writing of Poetry, Fiction, and Drama,* that there is both a simple and sophisticated kind of writing. “Essentially, sophisticated works ‘do’ more in the sense that they suggest more, imply a greater range of possibilities, develop more subtle shadings of meaning, than simple works do” (p. 135). Student writers, striving towards “literary individuation,” who consciously work to build ego strength may be better able to access this full sophisticated spectrum than might students who ignore or disregard their inner processes.

The instructor could present, as an example of ego dynamics and their functioning in the process of writing, the common condition of ego rigidity. Rigid ego positions initially formed through defence mechanisms or simply through collective conventions can affect behaviours, self-perceptions and worldviews. We may experience a rigid ego position on the question of what is “right” or what is “wrong” or what is “true.” In analysis we may discover that rigid ego positions hamper our psychological development by discounting the possibilities we need to explore in order to grow. Similarly, in our efforts to write creatively, rigid ego positions can hamper us. At their most basic, rigid ego positions can impose concretized ways of seeing and experiencing the world that are not spontaneous personal responses but rather unreflective, undifferentiated duplications of what is predominant in the collective. In other words, the rigid ego position will
prevent the writing student from writing in original ways. Consider, for instance, student
writers who wish to describe a sunset or a mountain range. The students can learn various
writing techniques to assist with the task; they can look at the works of other authors and
see how these techniques have been successfully used. But, ultimately, it is the students'
perceptions that will dictate the writing. The sunset and the mountain range that the
student sees in her mind's eye and thus depicts in her writing may well be the same.

Many books on Creative Writing stress the importance of the writer being able to
present material in unique and original ways, though none gives more than abstract
advice on how this is to be done. Student writers who learn first to acknowledge their
ego consciousness as an entity existing alongside the unconscious and who learn to
promote their ego's growth actively are more likely to see, experience, and imagine the
world in original ways.

The Persona

Jung (1971) defined the persona as a "functional complex that comes into
existence for reasons of adaptation of personal convenience" and is "exclusively
concerned with the relation to objects." It is the mask we wear, a front we
develop that acts as a mediator between ego consciousness and the external world and
which allows us to appear consistent and aids us in our interactions with others. It is also
what Jung called "the mad scientist," "the crazy artist," "the absent-minded professor," "the
happy homemaker"—all these superficial and stereotypic labels can be seen as related to the persona. "Politicians, movie stars, and
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but is in fact a collective construct. “Fundamentally, the persona is nothing real; it is a
compromise between individual and society” (Hopcke, 1995, p. 13). Interestingly, the
persona is both a psychic and physical manifestation. We discover it not only in the
behaviour of individuals, but also in the way they dress and speak, and in their body
language. A cowboy’s drawl and stance, for example, along with his boots and hat,
identify him as such. The aim of individuation is to “divest the self of the false wrappings
of the persona on one hand, and of the suggestive power of the primordial images [of the
collective unconscious] on the other” (p. 15). In Jungian analysis, “in its scrutiny of one’s
personal unconscious” there is often a “dissolution of the persona and...the relativization
of the ego. Analysis increases one’s awareness that one is not all one seems to be nor is
one’s conscious self-image, one’s ego, coextensive with the contents of one’s entire
unconscious self. The dissolution of the persona in analysis usually ushers in an
emergence of one’s real or essential self, or, as Jung put it, one’s true individuality...”
(p. 15).

Student writers who have some familiarity with this psychic component, and can
recognize it as an aspect of a character’s make-up, will benefit in a number of practical
ways. Perhaps one of the greatest advantages will be in the realization that there is more
to stereotypic characters than one may originally identify or express. The tough cop, for
example, or the hooker with the heart of gold—two clichéd stereotypic characters in
student writing—might be explored and transformed through an understanding of
persona. Students may be directed to find what exists beneath these masks. They might
be encouraged to consider how these stereotypic masks fit. Is the character comfortable in
the mask? When does the mask create problems for the character? Does the mask
confine the character? Does the mask liberate the character? Is the mask functional or
dysfunctional? How does the character use the mask? Conversely, a student’s work may
contain a character who is completely inauthentic through inconsistency. In this instance,
the writer may also wish to explore the possibility of an appropriate persona for this
character. Does the character, in fact, have a persona? Is the inconsistency of character
caused by this failing? If so, is this failing integral to the character or does the character
require a persona?

The student writer who works with the concept of persona, even when not fully
knowledgeable about its dynamics, will soon become aware of the many ways in which
this aspect of the personality can influence plot. For instance, a persona that is
constricting to the character’s ego will create a particular set of conflicts and tensions for that character. Characters devoid of a persona will have great difficulty in dealing with the people and situations in their world. Jung (1953) describes those without personas as “blundering from one social solecism to the next, perfectly harmless and innocent, soulful bores or appealing children, or...spectral Cassandras dreaded for their tactlessness, eternally misunderstood, never knowing what they are about, always taking forgiveness for granted, ... hopeless dreamers...blind to the reality of the world, which...has merely the value of an amusing or fantastic playground [to them]” (pp. 198-199). Characters whose personas do not fit into their collective milieu will be outcast and ostracized. Characters whose personas are weak will struggle to keep them intact, and characters with overly strong personas may find they become fully identified with them and must struggle to regain their genuine selves.

The following story is one in which I experimented with the concept of persona. The main character, Mr. Tuppy, is overly identified with his persona as school principal, while Mr. Trevor, his foil, is originally without a persona. Mr. Tuppy’s rigid occupational persona, which demands order and discipline, prevents him from enjoying play and relating to children; Mr. Trevor, on the other hand, for whom the world is a “fantastic playground,” gradually develops a persona that incorporates his child-like nature with the respectability of an adult in charge. What was interesting to me, as the story unfolded, was the way that Mr. Trevor’s developing persona usurped the principal’s stature. It was not my ego’s intention to turn Mr. Trevor into Mr. Tuppy’s doppelganger. It was the organic movement of the story that demanded this.
The Principal

Mr. Tuppy, solid as an observatory, wedged his fingers into the pockets of his stiff pants. He had extraordinary fingers, firm and fat, like ripe worms all of one length, rippling from his knuckles. Every now and again one hand would emerge like a fuzzy pet and smooth the sweaty black bristles on his head. Then the bell rang and both his hands materialized and tightened into fists.

He hated playground duty and didn't see why he, the principal, should have to do it, but before parent volunteers came forward, the task inevitably fell to him. Kids scaled chain link fencing and straggled through the muddy playing fields. For all the world, they looked and behaved like an army of undisciplined chimpanzees. Was it be possible to get them all into the school without upset? No sooner had he contemplated this, than a breathless girl began wailing: "Mr. Tuppy! Mr. Tuppy! Francisco's got a pin and says he's going to kill someone."

Francisco was an eight-year-old rebel, squint-eyed, with baggy shorts and bruised knees. Mr. Tuppy dropped the mallet of his hand on the boy's shoulder. The boy swayed. "Do you have a pin?" he demanded.

"No," the boy answered, "I got a rock."

"You have a rock," the principal corrected.

"Yeah," the boy spat.

"Are you going to kill someone?" Mr. Tuppy continued.
“Might...,” droned the boy, burying the toe of his running shoe into the dirt.

Children began forming a circle. The principal's nostrils tingled and he reasserted his grasp. "We'll talk about it in my office," he said, pulling the child along, while ineffectually waving the on-lookers away. As he passed through their ring, they began chanting: "Bristle head, bristle head, Tubby is a bristle head." The best thing to do was ignore it, but he couldn't. He knew his face was glowing like a ripe sun. "Who said that?" he demanded. There were dozens of children behind him, but only one smiling girl bent her head towards her chest. The second recess bell rang, and children surged towards the building. Some ran into him, others splattered mud on his trousers. “Stop!” He shouted. “Stop! Single file!” The tide of children was impossible to halt or slow, and the boy wiggled desperately in his grasp. It seemed almost as if the stampeding children were trying to free the little hooligan but the principal hung on. Inside, the thunder of charging feet made the school's hallway sound like a battlefield, but the principal continued to hold the boy with aching hands. With only ten paces left to his office, the surge of students suddenly swelled and dragged the delinquent boy away.

"They're little devils," his secretary, Mrs. MacLean, remarked. She had playful eyes and a broad smile. The unruliness of children delighted her. He nodded curtly and entered his office. He removed the handkerchief from his suit coat pocket and mopped sweat from his brow.
A button on the telephone flashed. He took a deep breath and positioned himself in the principal's chair. "Tuppy here," he said, lifting the receiver.

The voice that greeted him was strange. "Hello there, Mr. Tuppy. You don't know me but my niece Tina Trevor, she's a student there at your school...."

"Of course, Tina Trevor," the principal said. He'd never heard the name before, but made a mental note to check the student files.

"Well, I'm on workman's comp now, on account of my bum leg, and Tina thought I could come down to the school sometime to help out. I hear you always need parent volunteers, and well, seeing that both of hers are too busy working...." He punctuated his pauses with bursts of laughter.

"How generous of you," Mr. Tuppy said. "In fact, we're greatly in need of recess duty help. Can you come this afternoon?"

"Do you want my S.I.N. or driver's license or anything?"

"Oh, no, no, not at all," Mr. Tuppy replied. There had been some anxiety from parents about lax school procedures, but Tuppy had held firm. He wasn't going to scare off potential free assistance on account of red tape.

"What about the names of three references? I could have them write letters."

"Not necessary! You're Tanya Trevor's uncle."

"...Tina," the man corrected. "I don't have a criminal record, or anything like that. You can check with the police...."
"I'm sure you don't," Mr. Tuppy said.

"I haven't really had much experience with children. The wife and I, well, we never were able to have any, but I'm very family-orientated."

"Yes," Mr. Tuppy said, as he began tapping a pencil on his desk.

"Of course, we weren't expecting to be childless. My wife and I talked about adoption, but it seems when you adopt a kid, you adopt a whole host of problems."

"Unfortunate," the principal said and cleared his throat. "I'm afraid I have an appointment," he lied.

"Oh, Gee!" Mr. Trevor said, "sorry to have taken up so much of your time. I know you're the principal and must be a really busy guy."

"It's been a pleasure," Mr. Tuppy said smoothly. "See you at noon?"

"Gee, that's not too far off. I better get ready. I guess I'm about to become a busy guy too." He guffawed in an annoying way. Mr. Tuppy happily placed the receiver on its cradle.

Tina Trevor's uncle arrived at Mr. Tuppy's office at the sound of the first lunch bell. "I figured I better come in and say hello, so you can at least recognize me," he chortled. Mr. Tuppy, who had been brooding over a column of numbers, found it difficult to disguise the fact he was annoyed. The uncle wore khaki shorts and a short-sleeved pullover. He had black barbed hair sprouting on his legs and a few little stray ones at the end of his nose.

"Pleased to meet you," Mr. Tuppy said rather abruptly, leading him out of his office and into the long echoing hall. Students were already
shoving and jostling their way to freedom. Mr. Tuppy pointed beyond the
green wooden doors towards the playground and retreated. There was
definitely something odd about that man, Mr. Tuppy thought, but nothing
strange enough to refuse his assistance. When the second recess bell
rang, the principal was snacking on a watercress sandwich, still thinking
about Mr. Trevor. He arose from his seat, wiping crumbs from his beard
and around his mouth, and went to the window where he could observe
the students at play. If he looked past the children, over the cyclone fence
and row of poplars that bordered them, he could almost feel happy.
Although he could not hear the rustle of leaves and bird song, for these
sounds were obliterated by the noise of children.

"Hullo there, Mr. Tuppy," Mr. Trevor shouted from the playground,
holding a hand over his squinting eyes. "Looks like you’re in another
world."

"Come skip with me again," a sandy-haired girl whined, suddenly
clinging to Mr. Trevor's arm. "I want him to play ball with me," another
exclaimed, grabbing his other arm.

"Looks like I don't have time to talk to you now, Mr. Tuppy," he
screeched gleefully. "If this keeps up, it won't be long before I'm as busy
as you are!"

The principal, brought back from the tranquility of the poplars, felt
his gaze drop. Suddenly, it was as if he saw everything. Four boys playing
follow the leader, screaming "Yee ha!" at the tops of their lungs, shot
through a neighbouring hedgerow like rockets. A red-haired girl with a
look of exquisite snobbery on her face sifted mud through her fingers. Children swung recklessly from the trees, they fought and swore and kicked at playground equipment. Everything seemed completely out of order—everything was completely out of control. Mr. Trevor had vanished into the morass of shadowy children and Mr. Tuppy could not find him anywhere and then instantly, penetrating the horizon, he saw him, ascending the schoolyard slide—an overgrown child.

"Mr. Trevor...Mr. Trevor...." He shouted from the window. He removed the handkerchief from his pocket to mop his damp neck.

"Whhheeeeeecccccc!!" The noise that Mr. Trevor made was like a bomb dropping, and a flock of crows took flight. Although the principal watched helplessly from his office window, he could have sworn he felt the whoosh of air, as he watched Mr. Trevor scale the slide again. Children raced merrily away from the bottom, bumping brutally into one another, holding their ears, grinning, waiting for Mr. Trevor's raucous sound.

It was occurring all over again, this time in slow motion, with the principal being forced to helplessly witness what he could not stop. The giggling Mr. Trevor consumed a huge breath, his stomach distended. He scaled the slide and at the top abandoned himself to gravity with the noise exploding from his lips. He leapt off at the bottom. Children clung to him like ants on a chocolate bar. He galloped heedlessly to the jungle gym, dragging them along.
Mr. Tuppy mopped his forehead with his damp handkerchief. What relief he felt when finally the bell rang and children returned to the building. That evening he phoned Mr. Trevor from home. “There have been a few complaints,” he lied. “As playground supervisor, the expectation is that you keep order, ensure discipline, enforce control.” He asked Mr. Trevor if he understood. “Oh, yes, Mr. Tuppy,” Mr. Trevor said. “I can see how important all that is.” But the following day, Mr. Tuppy witnessed the same scenario, children as unbridled and jumbled as the day before, with Mr. Trevor presiding, the leader of the pack.

"The children really seem to love Tina Trevor's uncle," Mrs. MacLean sang when she next entered the principal's office. "Why, I've heard a bunch of them twittering about him. They think he's wonderful."

Mr. Tuppy felt immediately ill. "Of course, they love him," he snapped. "He lets them get away with murder! Look at the fool!" His voice rose in an uncharacteristic screech. He pointed through his window out into the playground. Mrs. MacLean looked scared. "I didn't mean to upset you," she said quietly and scuttled back to her office.

Mr. Tuppy was angry with himself for losing his temper. He wiped his damp forehead with his handkerchief. He didn't know why he felt so paralyzed. In truth, it would just be a matter of time before real complaints against Mr. Trevor began arriving. Home owners surrounding the school, parents, children themselves—all would eventually complain. He took a deep breath, stretched his tight neck. He ought to relax. The wheels of justice may turn slowly, but turn they must, he told himself.
A few days later, Mr Trevor peeked into his office. "How are you doing there, Mr. Tuppy?" His voice exploded. He was visiting Mrs. MacLean, and they had been chatting animatedly about the children.

"That Amanda Brown," Mr. Trevor began, without invitation. "She's quite a gal. She had me out there jumping double Dutch with her today. I tell you, Mr. Tuppy, this recess duty makes me feel like a new man. I could almost go back to work, it makes me feel so good."

"How wonderful," Mr. Tuppy responded tightly.

"And that Marshal Owen, now he's a little devil. He put a frog down Mary Ellen Bessemer's shirt, and do you know what she did?" he laughed raucously. "She hit him with a baseball bat, and broke the bat."

His laughter stupefied Mr. Tuppy. Mr. Tuppy was beside himself with horror and disbelief. "Such mutinous acts going unpunished?"

"Oh, no, they're not going unpunished!" Mr. Trevor chortled. "That Mary Ellen Bessemer got him real good!"

Mrs. MacLean grinned from behind a large bouquet of lilacs that disrespectfully spilled their perfume. "Look at my flowers the children and Mr. Trevor picked from me," she called to Mr. Tuppy. "Aren't they gorgeous?"

"What?" snapped Mr. Tuppy, fixing his memory on the lilac bushes that bordered the schoolyard. He'd laboured to keep the children away from them for years.
"Oh, it's O.K.," Mr. Trevor snorted. "I asked the lady who owns the lilac bushes if we could pick the ones that hung in the schoolyard, and she said that was fine by her."

Mr. Tuppy felt rage welling within him once more. He could feel his face grow hot and pink but decided that instead of exploding, he'd simply shut the door of his office and count to ten. The phone rang. "I just wanted to let you know," a woman gushed, "that that man who you have doing recess duty...he's just wonderful. My daughter Christabel talks about him incessantly. He's a tremendous asset to the school. He really seems to care about the children. My Christabel has always been a quiet child, and we've worried about her making friends in the past, but that man...well, he's made the world of difference for her, bridged a gap for her or something."

"Yes," Mr. Tuppy said nasally, feeling sick.

The following weeks brought fresh miseries for Mr. Tuppy for not only did he have to witness the lunch time madness, and speak to all the appreciative parents about Mr. Trevor, but it was as if the school had simultaneously lost its disobedient students. His most cherished role as purveyor of justice had simply evaporated. When he asked Mrs. MacLean about it, she beamed. "Mr. Trevor has really helped the children learn about cooperation," she said. He turned, without comment, to enter his office, when a loud mocking giggle petrified him. "Hello there, Mr. Tuppy, I was wondering if I could have a word with you for a few minutes—a personal matter." The principal stiffly pivoted, beholding the image of a
man who was the likeness of himself. He was certain that his shock did not go unnoticed, for the pudgy mocking Mr. Trevor, was now dressed in a suit and tie with a neat gleaming beard. "I grew it!" Mr. Trevor half shouted, stroking the hair on his chin. An absurd bunch of weedy flowers dangled from his other fist. "For you, Mrs. MacLean," he said, transferring the bouquet.

Mr. Tuppy, overwhelmed by humiliation and the desire to hide this embarrassing look-alike, quickly opened his office door and motioned Mr. Trevor in.

"See here, Mr. Trevor!" the principal began angrily. He was at a loss for words and felt suddenly foolish. He squirmed. How could he bring himself to tell the man to shave his beard and not to wear a suit, for Heaven's sake? How could he tell him that he was affronted by this insubordinate act of ruthless plagiarism? "I'm quite busy," he finally muttered.

"Oh, I know that, sir," Mr. Trevor smirked. "I know you're a busy man." His voice dipped, and the principal believed he detected an ironic edge to the tone. Mr. Trevor tugged at his tie knot. "Not the most comfortable clothes, are they?" he laughed.

"So, Mr. Trevor, have you come to talk to me about fashions?"

Mr. Trevor gave a raucous guffaw, disrupting a neat stack of papers, and then laughed loudly again when he saw what he'd done. "Not really, but sort of. I was wondering, now that I have a beard," he gave the
black growth of hair on his chin a yank, "if you could tell me what you use on yours to keep it so neat looking"?

"Use?" The principal was astonished.

"Yeah, you know, what kind of creams or tonics or what all. And how often do you trim it? Mine looks pretty neat now, but I don't know what it'll look like a month from now." Once again, Mr. Trevor convulsed with laughter.

"I don't use anything," the principal said harshly. "I trim it weekly. Is that all you wish to know?"

"Oh, one more thing, Mr. Tuppy...." Mr. Trevor still smirked, "I was kind of wondering if you were going to the concert tonight?"

"Concert? What concert?" Mr. Tuppy leaned forward. How was this Trevor character trying to mortify him now, he wondered.

Childish enthusiasm welled in Mr. Trevor's voice. "The grade twos are giving a concert. They've been at me all month to come to it, so I figured I would." Mr. Tuppy instinctively swivelled his chair to eye the calendar on the wall behind him. The date was unmarked. Mr. Tuppy kept his composure, but once Mr. Trevor left the room, the principal began to sweat. It seemed clear that Mr. Trevor was intentionally trying to sabotage him—dressed as he was, knowing of school events, the principal hadn't been informed about. Mr. Tuppy would put an end to this. He would call Mr. Trevor and tell him his services were no longer required. True enough, no other parent volunteers had come forwards, but Mr. Tuppy would rather deal with the situation himself than allow that
Trevor character to continue on his strange ridiculing path. He called Mrs. MacLean into his office. "Mr. Trevor tells me there's to be a grade two concert tonight? Is this so?"

"Why yes, Mr. Tuppy," Mrs. MacLean answered. "Don't you remember?"

"If I had remembered, Mrs. MacLean, I wouldn't have asked you," he snapped. His teeth clamped together with his intense effort to sound calm.

"Mr. Tuppy, I hope you don't mind my saying so, but you aren't looking at all yourself."

"Of course I don't mind you saying so, Mrs. MacLean, but actually, I've never felt better." He took a deep breath and tried to lean back calmly in his chair. He had never questioned Mrs. MacLean's loyalty or integrity; to do so would never have entered his mind, but suddenly he was stung with the sudden thought that Mrs. MacLean and Mr. Trevor were in league against him. After all, wasn't Mr. Trevor always bringing her flowers? Didn't she say wonderful things about the man? It could well be a plot, he considered, and that would explain why he never received notice about the Grade Two concert. His eyes narrowed. But why would they do this? What would they have to gain?

When the three o'clock bell rang he was still contemplating possible motives. The tiled corridors of the school sounded with echoing student footsteps until only one lone janitor made his rounds. Mr. Tuppy, hardly aware of the passing time, considered he'd been good to Mrs. MacLean,
and tried to remember any transgressions on his part. Perhaps he'd not always given her due credit, perhaps he'd, occasionally, been curt, but none of this seemed sufficient reason for trying to drive a respectable man out of his mind. He was so absorbed in recalling every historical interaction with his secretary, that he almost forgot about the concert. He was not in the habit of going to student events, and when the ugly image of the snarly-haired, snot-nosed grade twos caught him, he realized he would have no time to go home and put on a fresh dry shirt or a different suit jacket.

He left his office to appraise his appearance in the full-length mirror in the teacher's lounge, but was not pleased by what he saw. He knew that his shirt was damp with perspiration and his suit coat wrinkled, but he had not imagined to what extent. His usually clear eyes were bloodshot and his face was incredibly pale.

"Hey...you!" snarled the gruff voice of the janitor. He was pulling a bucket on wheels into the lounge, "gittoutahere!"

The initial sting of shock and guilt transformed into righteous indignation when Mr. Tuppy turned and saw the spindly little janitor.

"Do you know, sir, whom you're addressing?"

"I don't care who y'ar," the janitor hollered in one slow breath.

"I am the principal of this school!" Mr. Tuppy declared.

"I don't care if ya'r my Aunt Lucy, ya got no business being here while I'm trying t'git this pig sty in order."
Mr. Tuppy's stiff leg muscles turned to jelly and, feeling dizzy, he leaned against a wall for support. Blood pumped through his head, and he became aware of a tingling numbness in his arms. Somewhere, distantly, he heard the peal of excited voices and reckless footsteps and wondered momentarily if it was an auditory hallucination or the sound of angels descending. But then he recalled, the Grade Two concert. Urgently he pulled himself from the wall and staggered towards his office. "Things will be all right," he reassured himself, "once I compose myself" But his office door seemed such a long way off, and the sounds of anxious children and their proud parents were upon him before he ever reached it.

"You must be Mr. Trevor!" sang a tall thin woman with her son's scrawny hand knotted in hers. "My Earl's told me so much about you!" She displayed a dazzling universe of teeth.

The principal stiffened himself with a superhuman effort. His groping hand reached for the necktie that thwarted his speech. The words he needed danced through his head: "I am Mr. Tuppy! The principal!" but his words remained trapped.

"He's not Mr. T," the boy whined, "he's just the principal! There's Mr. T!" he added, pointing to a guffawing gentleman at the other end of the hall.

"Oh?" the woman squeaked, two tight lips closing off the mirror sparkle of horsy teeth just long enough for her to twirl and speak to the man she had really come to see. She moved away from Mr. Tuppy just as
eagerly as she'd approached him, dragging Earl, who turned and gave the principal a parting salute with his tongue.

The school spun in a ribbon of fluorescent light, and children's displayed art work moved in and out of Mr. Tuppy's blurring vision. He leaned against the wall again and tried to shut his eyes. He didn't want to look down the hall and see Mr. Trevor, but his eyes refused to close. He could see Mr. Trevor clutching the hand of the braying woman who moments ago had been smiling at him, and could not pull his eyes away. Crowds of happy adults were gathering, shaking Mr. Trevor's hand and congratulating. Children leapt upon him like fleas, and he ruffled their hair and embraced them with a natural, unaffected exuberance.

Pain exploded from the principal's chest. If only he could get to his office and breathe, he thought as his shoulder rubbed against the brick wall. He could see the golden doorknob of the outer office in a kind of iridescent halo. He tottered forward, hand extended. Loud mocking laughter echoed after him. A stabbing pain claimed his arm as his hand fell weakly upon the doorknob. He knew it was just a matter of moments before he would be safely inside, and then, from somewhere behind, two petulant voices combined: "Bristle top, bristle top, Tubby is a bristle top!" His neck jolted with a spasm, and he caught the fleeting trace of two giggling girls running towards Mr. Trevor. Then he saw him, smiling and crowing, his hand shaking the janitor's. He could not hear now; it was as if the sound in the world had been turned off, but he could see the new
beard on Mr. Trevor moving up and down as he spoke, and the janitor's
grin before everything went black.
The Shadow

Jung’s concept of the “shadow” could also benefit writing students. Working with the shadow can assist in strengthening the ego, accessing the inner world, and translating its contents more efficiently into writing. Instructors could introduce students to this term by presenting the dream that Jung (1963) related, regarding the shadow, in his work Memories, Dreams, Reflections. In the dream, Jung found himself in a windstorm carrying a small flickering light while being pursued from behind by a dark, overwhelming creature. On waking, he wrote: “I realized at once that the figure was my own shadow on the swirling mists, brought into being by the little light I was carrying. I knew too that this little light was my consciousness, the only light I have. Though infinitely small and fragile in comparison with the powers of darkness, it is still a light, my only light” (pp. 87-88).

Instructors could explain how Jung developed the term “shadow” as a metaphor for that part of the unconscious psyche that resides just beyond one’s ego consciousness. According to Jungian thought, the shadow is composed of those negative qualities and traits that an individual has rejected. The collective also has a shadow. In the collective shadow, those things that have been deemed inappropriate in a particular society or culture reside; greed, rage, and hatred, for example, inhabit our collective shadow (Zweig & Abrams, 1990). From an early age, children in our society are taught consciously to repress these feelings and behaviours and to cultivate their opposites. The poet Robert Bly (1988), in his A Little Book on the Human Shadow, metaphorically outlines the way the shadow, both personal and collective, is formed:

[When we are children] energy radiates out from all parts of our psyche. A child running is a living globe of energy....One day we noticed that our parents didn’t like certain parts of that ball. They said things like: “Can’t you be still?” Or “It isn’t nice to try and kill your brother.” Behind us we have an invisible bag, and the part of us our parents don’t like, we, to keep our parents’ love, put in the bag. By the time we go to school our bag is quite large. Then our teachers have their say: ‘Good children don’t get angry over such little things.” So we take our anger and put it in the bag.... Then we do a lot of bag-stuffing in high school. (p. 17)
These attitudes, behaviours, and feelings that we sever from consciousness and stuff into “the shadow bag,” as Bly calls it, do not actually disappear, though to our eyes they do not appear as parts of our selves anymore. According to the Jungian model, the unconscious shadow content regresses and gains a particular kind of strength in the psyche, which can overwhelm or “possess” consciousness when consciousness is weak. For example, when we are tired or run down, we may become moody, irritable, or pessimistic, in spite of our best efforts to maintain more collectively acceptable attitudes and behaviours. James Hall (1986) writes: “what is developmentally cast into the shadow might just as well in different circumstances have become ego. Much of the shadow can be reworked in adult life and add dimension and contrast to the ego” (p. 37).

There are many examples of the human shadow that instructors could point to in literary fiction. One of the classic stories often cited to illustrate the extreme workings of shadow possession is R. L. Stevenson’s (2003) *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in which a quiet, mild-mannered doctor, whose conscious objective is to help humankind, becomes a lascivious, murdering beast. The instructor could point out that there is a particular authenticity in this fiction, for although Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, as they exist in Stevenson’s text, do not exist and never could have existed in the world, the story conveys a particular psychological dynamic. This is the same dynamic Jung identifies and labels as shadow possession (von Franz, 1980, pp. 95-121).

Another classic work of fiction in which the human shadow is rendered is Oscar Wilde’s (1998) *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In this instance, the dynamic is shadow projection, rather than possession, a process in which the unacknowledged shadow is projected upon an object, an individual, or a group of individuals (von Franz, 1980). The shadow is projected before it can be integrated back into consciousness. One may, for example, consider the individual who takes the last piece of cake at a birthday party as “greedy,” until one acknowledges one’s own unacknowledged greed for the last piece of cake. The greed appears in another when we refuse to see it (or are incapable of seeing it) in ourselves. We label the other as “greedy” because we ourselves want the last piece of cake. In the case of Dorian Gray, his shadow is projected onto his portrait. It is his own image that carries all the dark and unacceptable qualities of personality that he does not wish to acknowledge. At the end of the story, his desire to destroy the portrait results from a final denial to carry his shadow.
In certain individuals who have, for various reasons, become identified with collectively negative traits, the shadow can harbour more conventionally positive qualities and can likewise possess or be projected. In Charles Dickens’ (1991) “A Christmas Carol,” for example, the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge after a night of ghostly visitations finds his positive shadow in possession of his person, while the captain in Joseph Conrad’s (1950) “The Secret Sharer” projects the positive shadow quality of decisive action upon his doppelganger Leggat.

In Creative Writing practice and education, teaching student writers about the shadow can assist them in enlarging their own ego consciousness, while at the same time can give them new methods of exploring the psychology of the characters they write about. Understanding that a character possesses an unconscious shadow invites student writers to produce more “psychically authentic fiction.” In psychically authentic fiction, no matter how seemingly unrealistic or disconnected from the author’s conscious life and world, the story resonates as a true account of a character’s authentic human psychic action and interaction. Besides the classic works already mentioned, many other classic fictions in which the incredible is made credible come to mind: Franz Kafka’s (1996) Metamorphosis, for example, in which the main character, Gregor Samsa, awakes one morning to find he has become a bug, and Bram Stoker’s (1997) Dracula, in which an innocent and unassuming clerk, Jonathan Harker, is imprisoned in a vampire’s castle. We know that people literally do not turn into bugs and that there are no such things as literal vampires, yet the characters in these works respond to their unbelievable predicaments and worlds in such humanly authentic ways that we can not help but acknowledge these stories as credible, even if we know they could not have taken place in the “real” world. In these two instances, we can discern the psychological mechanics of shadow possession and projection, though they are not quite as obvious as they are in the other examples. We did not know Gregor Samsa prior to the possession of his devolved insect-like shadow, and the story of Dracula does not make the implicit connection between Jonathan Harker and Dracula as his shadow projection. Approaching all of these works, however, with an understanding of the human shadow and its workings can assist us in seeing the numerous and diverse ways this specific psychological concept and mechanism can be employed to produce a psychically authentic situation in fiction.

As a writer of fiction, I have used my understanding of the shadow and its workings not only as a starting place for many of the stories I have written but also as a
means of assisting with character and plot development once a story has begun. In the following pages, I will present and reflect upon two stories and a chapter of a children’s novel I authored in which the psychological concept and mechanics of the human shadow were consciously employed.

The first work in which I began experimenting with the conception and dynamics of the human shadow as a tool in the development of fiction is an epistolary story called “Abiding Peace.” I began the story by envisioning the archetypal “good daughter.” I decided to create such a character because at the time my mother had recently died, and I was struggling with my own inner “good daughter” shadow and attempting to find an authentic place between this shadow and her opposite. Her opposite, in my case, is what Jung might call “the resistant daughter.” According to Jung (1982), both the “good daughter” and the “resistant daughter” arise through a mother complex. The good daughter is unable to differentiate herself from her mother while the resistant daughter, in order to differentiate herself, rebels against the mother. “The motto of this type is, ‘Anything, so long as it is not like Mother!’” (p. 118). Both these archetypal patterns when unconscious (as we can say of all unconscious archetypal patterns) prevent the genuine expression of an individual. Without even thinking, the daughter acts out of compliance or resistance to the mother, and often it is only possible after the mother is dead that the daughter can begin to question her responses and develop a stance of her own uninfluenced by her mother’s taste, values and attitudes.

In “Abiding Peace,” I had no preconceived notions of what this “good daughter’s” shadow might look like. I began with an attitude of exploration and allowed the unconscious to supply the information. The name of the character, “Dora,” arrived without my really thinking too much about it. Later, when I reflected on the choice of the name, I associatively thought of “dormouse” and considered how the name could be accentuating a diminished status. I also thought of the French verb “dormir,” “to sleep,” and considered how this perhaps could be providing a clue to the great unconsciousness of this particular character. Rather than taking control and consciously guiding the story in any given direction, these realizations simply affirmed my trust in allowing the unconscious to inform. I allowed Dora to reveal herself to me through the letters she was writing to her dead mother.

“The letter” is a useful creative writing exercise both for student fiction and non-fiction writers. In fiction writing, the letter one character writes to another not only
reveals the ego position of the character writing but also can work to reveal a subtext or the “shadow story” that is intuitively pieced together by the reader. The letter is an effective way of unearthing a character’s shadow in that the immediate subjectivity of a letter, particularly when it is directed to another specific character, narrows the field of consciousness in a story. From a Jungian perspective, the more limited the field of consciousness, the greater the impact of the shadow.

In technical aspects of writing, we can consider this concept in relation to points of view. A conventional first-person point of view (or what we might call “the ego’s point of view”) will always be immediately open to the strong influence of the narrator’s shadow, since what the characters present to the reader in the narrative is only ever what they are consciously aware of. An omniscient third-person narrator, on the other hand, (what we might call “the Self’s view point”) possesses a broad and diffuse field of consciousness that can include that of the many characters rendered. The “shadow story” of the narrator, therefore, is absent, while that of the characters themselves become more prominent.

As a writer, pursuing the shadow of the “good daughter” in “Abiding Peace,” I attempted to remain constantly alert to the underside of Dora’s statements. At one point, she writes the following: “I’ve realized for the first time in my life how much I depended on your being here for me. When I was trying to make the arrangements, I couldn’t decide on the casket. It’s crazy, but my first response was to want to ask you—and then I remembered you were dead and I could never ask you anything again. I miss you, Mum, and wish you were still here to tell me what to do” (Sonik, 1990, p. 45). Besides seeing the surface grief she is expressing at the loss of a maternal advisor, I take note of Dora’s paralysis, her seeming inability to act without her mother. What is not directly expressed but shown in shadow is the frustration and rage caused by being paralyzed and dependent. As I wrote this story, I did not allow these thoughts to direct the course of the story, but instead allowed them simply to inform the unconscious, taking a position toward the story as a listener rather than a self-conscious creator. As Jung tells us (1963), “just as the unconscious affects us, so the increase in our consciousness affects the unconscious” (p. 326). I allowed Dora to write her letters and I paid attention to what the letters said—both what they directly stated and what was indirectly shown. The concept of a writer “listening” to her story as it unfolds rather than consciously directing the story's unfolding is fundamentally opposed to what is taught in elementary and high
school Creative Writing curricula. Also, in university writing workshops, approaches to the process of rendering are rarely discussed as the product itself becomes focal.

The process of rendering by "listening," and specifically in this instance by listening to the character's conscious and shadow content of a developing work, must be undertaken with an active consciousness. I therefore call this writing process technique "conscious listening." "Conscious listening" can be seen to work along the same lines as the "observer effect" in quantum physics and the idea that "vigilance operating through continual observation actually alters the physical atomic world" (Woolf, 1994, p. 70). In the instance of a work of fiction, continual observation through conscious listening subtly delineates a story's development—and it is the subtlety and the spontaneity this subtlety produces that are of most value in this approach.
Abiding Peace

March 15, 1990

Dear Mum,

It’s the night after your funeral, and I think if I can write to you it might help me deal with my pain. I wrote a short note the night you died. It made me feel a little easier. I’m so hurt, remembering, Mum, and I can’t think of any other way to get my head clear again. I considered going to a psychiatrist after it happened, but I know how you’d feel about that. I don’t think you’d mind me writing a letter to you every now and again though, would you?

I’ve realized for the first time in my life how much I depended on your being here for me. When I was trying to make the arrangements, I couldn’t decide on the casket. It’s crazy, but my first response was to want to ask you—and then I remembered you were dead and I could never ask you anything again. I miss you, Mum, and wish you were still here to tell me what to do.

Bobby flew in from Arizona. You wouldn’t have recognized him, he’s so different. I know how much you loved Bobby, and I really hate to write anything unflattering about him, but I’ve got to say, Mum, I really detest him—more now than ever. I can’t understand why he never came to see you when you were alive. God knows you’d written him enough, begging. He pulled into the driveway in a limo, and of course he was all decked out in an expensive business suit and kept checking this gold
watch on his wrist. I could just hear the meter ticking in his head. And then he started criticizing me for everything I’d done. He said I’d spent too much money on your casket, that I’d chosen a bad funeral home, that I should have gotten an Anglican minister. I just fell apart.

He’s staying at a hotel tonight and I’m glad. He’s only sticking around to collect what you left him in your will, and then he’s going back. I hope he can do it in the next couple of days because I really don’t think I can stand the sight of him much longer.

I don’t know what you saw in him, why you admired him so much. He’s such a scum and he never cared about you at all. There was no reason in the world why he couldn’t have sent you plane fare to go see him. He’s got pots of money. He’s got a chain of rip-off nursing homes he never told you about. I could just scream when I think of how much sympathy he milked from you—poor, struggling Bobby, trying to make good—all those corny, stupid letters full of pretend problems. I know you sent him money, because I looked through your checkbooks. How could you be such a bad judge of character? I only hope wherever you are, you know the truth about him now.

At least he was uncomfortable at your funeral. All your friends were there. Sweet Mrs. Beatty from across the street, Darlene Fletcher, Agnes Moore, Lillian White. All the ladies from your choir. Even Mr. Schultz from the grocery came, and they were all very nice to me telling me I’d been a good daughter and that if I needed anything to let them know. None of them talked to Bobby. Maybe none of them knew who he was. I didn’t
introduce him, anyway. I just let him stand there by himself. He didn’t come back home afterward for coffee and sandwiches. I have to admit that pleased me.

I’ve got so many beautiful sympathy cards, Mum. I’ve lined them up across the mantelpiece. I know you wouldn’t have liked some of them. Most of the older ladies sent religious ones I shoved to the back, but some of the others are quite pretty and touching. I think I like Darlene’s best. It’s very simple—two purple long-stemmed flowers on the front, and the verse reads: “May time bring peace.” Darlene wrote a little note inside: “Dear Dora, Your mother was a truly wonderful person. We shall all feel a tremendous loss. She always spoke so highly of you and loved you so dearly. You were a model daughter who brought her joy—your commitment and love were evident always.”

Of course, I’ll write to everyone who came, thanking them and I’ll keep all the cards.

Love,

Dora

March 16, 1990

Dear Mum,
That obnoxious son of yours was here today, flashing his garish gold watch around and pawing over your possessions. I caught him in your bedroom rummaging through your jewellery box. He had the audacity to ask me what I did with your opal brooch. I could have smashed him in the head. Needless to say, I didn’t tell him it was pinned to my black sweater. I guess he thought he’d pawn it or something. He’s such a jerk. I know he’s really upset that you left the house to me. Even though I stayed with you when he went gallivanting off, he thinks he’s entitled to it, I suppose!

Last night I couldn’t sleep, wondering why he was your favourite. I made hot milk, just the way I used to make it for you, with honey and butter, but I still couldn’t get to sleep. I hate to be bitter, Mum, but it seems to me he always got the rewards and I always got the work. I always did what you told me and he never did, and still you liked him better than me. I wanted you to wake up and see him for what he really was, but you just told me not to be jealous.

I don’t think he deserves the twenty thousand you left him. He’s got plenty of money of his own, and you know the kind of paltry pay I get. I don’t even know for sure how long I’ll be able to afford to live in our house. Maybe in a year I’ll sell it and move into an apartment—maybe even get a roommate. I guess I can tell you now that that was always one of my fantasies. But still, I’d rather have been able to do it on my own terms than be forced to do it because I don’t have enough money to stay here.
I was also upset about your leaving him our electric typewriter and our Royal Dolton china. As soon as I found out, I packed it all up and hid it in my secret place in the attic. You mustn't have been thinking straight when you made that will! What could these things possibly mean to him. I did let him take the down comforter from your bed, though, and I hope he has many unpleasant nights under it. I also gave him all your bed linen because I've decided to sell your bed and make the room over into a kind of study. I wish you were here to tell me how to do it. I have such trouble making decisions and as you know, I've never really had good taste, but Mrs. Beatty said she'd help me pick the wallpaper. She's such a dear lady. She baked me a dozen blueberry muffins and we chatted for about an hour today.

I'm supposed to go back to work tomorrow, but I feel like I need at least another week off. I know you'd think I was doing the wrong thing. You always believed if I missed one day of work my typing and shorthand skills would deteriorate and I was always trying to assure you that being a secretary wasn't like being a concert pianist. Remember the time I had stomach flu and I went to work to humour you? I vomited in my waste paper basket and they sent me home. I don't think I've ever been so humiliated, and you were so mad at me.

I never wanted to tell you when you were alive because I thought you'd think I was ungrateful, but I didn't want to be a secretary. You'd been a secretary and had your heart set on my being one, but I really wanted to be an interior decorator.
I guess I should be thankful I didn’t pursue my dreams. In a way, I wish I’d told you before you died. I know we’d both have gotten a good laugh out of it.

Anyway Mr. McCorbet’s been really good about all this time I’ve been missing from work. He’s a nice man. He came to your funeral. And Mum, I’m glad you got me a job working for him. You were right, I couldn’t have gotten one on my own. What was it you used to say about me? “Dowdy and lacklustre”—so true, At least, if anything happened to my job now, I’d have ten year’s experience to fall back on. But still, I wish you were here to help me choose. I just can’t get over how much I miss you. I never thought I’d feel this way.

About missing work, if you’re going to get mad at anyone over it, get mad at Bobby. If it weren’t for him breathing down my neck, I know I’d be able to return sooner. He tells me he’s going to be here for a week so I can look for the brooch, the typewriter, and the china. I’ll give him those over my dead body!

Love,

Dora

March 20, 1990

Dear Mum,
It seems such a long time since I've written to you, although it's only been four days. I've just been going out of my mind with Bobby around.

I told Mrs. Beatty all about him and how he's badgering me for what you left him. I also told her I couldn't find these things. She's such a nice lady. Did you know she knows the sheriff personally? She phoned him up, right here from our kitchen, and talked to him about Bobby. He said he'd take care of him and send him back to Arizona for me. You can't believe how relieved I am.

Anyway, I'm feeling much better, and the sheriff said that if I can't find those things Bobby wants, it's not the end of the world. You wouldn't believe what that son of yours was threatening to do. He said he was going to get the police and a search warrant so he could tip the entire house upside down. I have to laugh when I think about it. He'll never get a search warrant now.

Mrs. Beatty also has been helping in other ways. Yesterday she put a perm in my hair. I think you'd be pleased with the results. She said, "Dora, you're such a pretty thing, why don't you do something with your hair?" and the next day here she was with all these rollers and this home permanent kit. She didn't even ask me to pay her. She said sometime this week we ought to go shopping together and she'll help me pick out a new outfit. Even though she's twice my age, we have such fun together. I imagine this is the kind of fun I would have had with a real friend. But I've been such a recluse all my life.
I know it was my own fault I didn’t make any friends, Mum, and I know you just didn’t understand why I wasn’t more outgoing like Bobby. I don’t suppose I’ll change much now. But Mrs. Beatty’s attention is awful sweet, don’t you think?

I’m feeling guilty about not having the stairway repaired yet. I know you’d be appalled by my procrastination. To tell you the truth, I haven’t been able to bring myself to even open the stairwell door. I hope “time will bring peace,” as Darlene’s card says. By the way, you needn’t worry—I got all the thank-you notes sent.

Love,
Dora

March 23, 1990
Dear Mum,

Still not back to work on account of Bobby, who won’t go home even though the sheriff told him to. Now he’s trying to get a lawyer and take me to court. I just can’t fathom him at all. I told him it would cost him more money to take me to court than the few things you left him are worth. That should make him think again—and, anyway, he’s got his twenty thousand already. I know you’d be disappointed at his pettiness but kind of wish you were around to see it. The other day when Mrs. Beatty was leaving, he was coming up the path and she went right over to him and smacked in the face. I was watching from the window, and I
practically fell down laughing. He was so shocked, and it was obvious
he's been trying to turn on the charm to win her over. I don't know what
she said to him, but he just left. I really like her, Mum. No one can ever
take your place, but Mrs. Beatty is almost a second mother to me.

This morning we went shopping together and she picked out this
beautiful dress. I know you wouldn't like it one bit, and told her so. She
asked, "Do you like it?" I had to admit I did, so she bought it for me. I
don't know when I'll ever wear it. I never go anywhere and it's certainly
too fancy for work or everyday, but she was so keen on my having it I
knew it would disappoint her if I said no.

She's also very insistent about my getting a checking account and
wants to take me to the bank tomorrow. She almost fell off her chair
when I told her I didn't have one, and she gave me a funny look when I
told her I'd wanted one once but you said it wasn't a good idea because I
had no mind for figures.

I felt like a complete fool. Why didn't you ever tell me that most
working people have checking accounts? Sometimes I think you
intentionally kept me in the dark about things because you were afraid of
what I might do if I were more independent. Shame on you, Mum.

Love,
Dora

March 27, 1990
Dear Mum,

I finally went back to work today and made the first step in getting the basement stairs repaired. Bobby's still hanging around. I see him occasionally peeking through windows, but I never let him in. He looks crazy and I'm a little bit afraid of him.

Work is the same as always, no new faces, the same old letters on the keyboard. Mrs. Beatty met me for lunch today and that seemed to make the day move a bit faster. I kept thinking about you while we were eating and wondering why in ten years you never once met me for lunch. Mrs. Beatty took me to a restaurant and paid, of course. I know you'd be livid if you thought I was squandering my money eating in restaurants.

When I got home, I finally opened the door and looked at those stairs down to the basement. It was horrible that night when I saw you there at the bottom, all twisted. Today my flesh got puckered up when I looked at the railing that had come off in your hand and the place where the stair was missing. We'd argued so often about putting a light above that landing. You said it would cost too much but now that this house is mine I think I'm going to do it.

That night you died was the first I'd ever spent alone in my life. I left the light on in my room all night long. It seems like it happened an eternity ago, and I still miss you, but writing these letters has helped me a lot, and I don't feel half as bad as I did about it.
I'm going to have a warm bath tonight and will be using your bath salts. I know I wasn't allowed to when you were alive, but I figure being the practical woman you were you'd rather I used them than have them sit on your vanity forever. I'm also making good use of your French perfumes and nail-polish. Mrs. Beatty came over to help me go through your clothes. I gave her most of them since she's been so kind to me, and she got this crazy notion to give me a manicure and a make-over. You never told me she'd been a beautician! I felt a little weird at first wearing your makeup, but I have to say it really did something to improve me, and I got to asking myself why, after telling me almost everyday of my life how plain I was, you never encouraged me to use makeup. I remember you saying, "Dora, paint will only make you look worse. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, and you certainly can't do with paint what nature did not intend."

Mrs. Beatty says I'm a true beauty; and although I know she's just being kind, Mr. McCorbet was paying particular attention to me today and complimenting me on my appearance, and a man passing by the bus stop whistled at me.

Love,
Dora

March 29, 1990
Dear Mum,

It's after midnight, but I have to write to you. I can't sleep I'm so upset. Tonight Bobby really did it. You won't believe it; but he actually broke into the house while I was at work and discovered my secret place in the attic.

I've been storing my letters up there, so I know he read everything and found the typewriter and the china and the opal brooch on my black sweater that you tore.

That sneaky little scum. He always thought he was such a big man running off to Arizona like that and leaving me to do everything. Well, tonight he thought he was some kind of superhero or something, because when I got home from work there he was standing in my kitchen looking crazy and hurling all kind of accusations at me.

I'd had a really good day at work, and Mr. McCorbet asked me out to dinner and I was feeling really good. You know I've never been out on a date in my life, and I was so excited. I was going to wear my new dress and your Chanel No. 5. And then Bobby comes along and tires to ruin everything.

I asked him if he knew he could be charged for breaking and entering, and he said did I know I could be charged for murder? Well I wasn't going to let him get away with that. He claimed he'd suspected foul play right from the beginning. Can you believe that, trying to cloak his greedy trail with concern for you? As if he'd stick around here for that! It was lucky he was standing with his back against the door leading
to the basement, and really lucky that the door was slightly ajar. I just ran into him as hard as I could. He didn’t even know what hit him, and bam, bam, bam, there he was, at the bottom of those broken stairs all twisted up—just like you, Mum.

I couldn’t believed how easy it was, so much easier than when I did it to you. You were so determined to get that brooch off my sweater that I thought you were going to pull me down the stairs with you. (I’ve always admired your persistence, by the way, Mum). I didn’t even have to change my clothes before I called the police, and that nice sheriff; Mrs. Beatty’s friend, came and sat with me for a long time. He wrote the police report without asking me anything. He wrote that Bobby had broken into my house and had accidentally fallen down the stairs.

Mr. McCorbet arrived around then, and he sat with me, too, but now everyone’s gone and I’ve got the light on in my bedroom and I feel so alone, just like on the night you died, Mum.

I think maybe I’ll go over to Mrs. Beatty’s even though it’s late. She’s so kind to me, I’m sure she won’t mind talking. And by the way, Mum, Mrs. Beatty thinks I ought to learn to drive. She says it’s a real shame your car is just sitting in the driveway going to rust while I’m taking a bus to work every morning. I know you used to tell me if I ever got a driver’s license no pedestrians would be safe, but Mrs. Beatty says anyone can drive, and she’s willing to give me lessons free.

Love,
Dora
April 4, 1990

Dear Mum and Bobby,

It was the most lovely day for your funeral, Bobby. All Mum’s friends came and I’m getting such a collection of sympathy cards I plan to store in the attic. It was sad, Bobby, that none of your friends came. I guess Arizona is a long way off, but I’ve been receiving some cards from them, so they are thinking about you. My favourite is the one I got from some one named Margaret Fuller. It has a picture of a beautiful dove on it and the message reads: “May you be strengthened by his memory and find abiding peace.” Inside she wrote a note: “Dear Dora, although I’ve never met you, I know you were a loving sister to Robert. He spoke of you and your mother often and told me that he wished you lived nearer.”

Oh, Bobby, we were never as close as I would have liked, and I miss you so desperately and feel such grief that I think by including you in these letters to Mum I can be “strengthened” and find “abiding peace.”

I almost forgot to tell you, I got a call from Arizona today, and apparently, Bobby, you didn’t make a will, which means I as your only living relative inherit everything you had. I’m sure this isn’t the way you would have wanted it, but I promise to spend your money wisely and try not to let my “frivolous nature,” as Mum always called it, diminish your fortune.
I have to admit I'm happy I won't have to leave this house. I like it here, right across the street from Mrs. Beatty, and I guess I am getting a bit old for apartments and roommates.

The sheriff is coming by tomorrow to take me on a picnic. I think Mr. McCorbet was a bit jealous when I told him, but I promised to accompany him to a dance Friday night. Do you think I did the right thing, Mum?

It's so difficult living alone, having no one but Mrs. Beatty to ask what's right. Not that she minds helping me solve my problems, but I think sometimes I'm imposing, though she never makes me feel this way. I find solace in the good friends you made over the years, Mum, and perhaps will find solace with some of Bobby's friends. Unfortunately, I have to go to Arizona to collect your things, Bobby. I hope you don't mind if I give Margaret Fuller a call. Of course, I'll send her and all your friends thank-you notes right away, neither of you need worry.

I know how much you loved Bobby, Mum, and I know how long it had been since you'd seen Mum, Bobby. In a way, I find comfort in thinking of the two of you together, laughing at my foibles as you used to.

Love,

Dora
When I began writing “Abiding Peace,” I did not know that Dora had murdered her mother and was surprised when the cumulative evidence she supplied, both in her conscious narrative and its shadow, finally allowed me to figure it out. The feeling, then, was not so much one of consciously directing an outcome as of having witnessed the outcome and its inevitability.

Another story that I worked with using Jung’s concept of the shadow is entitled “The Black Wig.” The genesis of this fiction also has its roots in a personal life experience. When I was a teenager I worked as a chambermaid in various hotels. In one particular hotel, there was a very dowdy, timid maid with thinning hair who had been cast into the role of scapegoat for all the housekeeping problems by a rather domineering and bullying head housekeeper. The dowdy, timid maid seemed to me to be a woman who had lost not only all of her self-esteem but also her self-respect. I asked myself where her self-assertion, confidence and life force had gone. She seemed to be an extremely responsible woman in regards to her work and family, but either through a martyr complex or just a lack of self-esteem she seemed unable to stand up for herself. Eventually, she was fired from this job and no one knew what became of her. Later, when I learned about Jung’s concepts of projection and the shadow and began experimenting with them in writing, Lynne, the dowdy chambermaid, was a character who came to mind as one whose unconscious must harbour many collective and conventionally positive traits, such as assertion, animation and dynamism. Her appearance in the world was that of the archetypal victim, a “welfare mom,” who through no fault of her own, other than perhaps an inability to believe she was worthy of anything better, had become trapped in this great impoverishment. When I began to ask the questions again, “Where did this woman’s life force go?” I thought of her thinning hair, and then in my mind’s eye saw the numinous black wig, for things in the shadow tend to take on an eerie numinosity which can attract and possess.
Lynne wound an orange electrical cord around her canister vacuum. She made last minute swipes at swirly, sticky fingerprints with her duster, then she hauled the bulky metal trolley out into the corridor. It was time for her coffee, but she couldn't have any today, she was running behind. The master key twisted in a lock, the door clicked, heat poured through the balcony's doors. In a puddle of light, a styrofoam wig stand offered radiant coils of dark hair. Lynne rushed past, uneasy. In all the months she'd been a chambermaid, she'd never dallied over the guests' belongings. Still this restraint never showed in her work. She inevitably needed help finishing her rooms, and yesterday, the head housekeeper, Jean, said if she didn't clean faster she could drag her feet in the unemployment line.

The rumpled bedspread felt like a weight when she lifted it. She wobbled, off balance. So far, she was thankful she had not become absent-minded. She still remembered the array of cleansers needed for the bathroom and the number of towels she needed to replace. She plunged her hand to the bottom of the toilet and swished a stringy rag around the bowl. The toilet cleanser was aquamarine, the same colour as her husband's Firebird convertible. She shoved the rag deeper, down into
the closet bend, and twisted. The last time she'd seen him, he was in that
car, with a lofty brunette, whose teeth seemed to glisten like stars.

"Should I hold dinner?" she'd called as the chalky dust of gravel
rose above them, and they roared from the driveway. Small flecks of shit
finally floated to the water's surface and she flushed. After eighteen years
of marriage and two children, he was gone forever. At least she was
pretty sure it was forever, because no one knew where he'd gone.

Tiny semi-circles of pubic hair clung to the bathtub walls like
passengers on a capsizing ship. It's not as though she really missed him.
The soapy cloth with which she attacked the tub proved ineffective
against the hairs. And now she had the job of raising two teenaged
daughters alone.

She picked the remaining hairs from the tub with her fingers. It
dawned on her that perhaps it was because she thought too much that
she fell behind in her work. But it wasn't really thinking; it was just her
mind wandering like a stray dog she couldn't catch.

Tonight she would make macaroni and cheese for dinner again.
The kids would complain. She'd feel like a heel. If only she could manage
money better, clip coupons or something.

She dropped to her knees and squirted the floor with disinfectant.
It stung the insides of her nostrils. She thought about her overdue phone
bill sitting on the dresser at home. Talcum powder and long strands of
the wig's dark lusty hair clung to her cloth. It must be a lone woman in
this room, she thought.
It was strange the things she looked at and thought about these days. Strange how this job had affected her. She wondered suddenly and with some alarm what the world would look like if everyone lost all their hair at the same moment.

When she stood to wipe out the sink, she noticed her own hair in the mirror: mousy-brown, flat, limp, pulled back severely with her daughter's stretchy ponytail holder. "I couldn't liiiive if my friends knew you cleaned toilets," her daughter had said.

She saturated a clean shammy in furniture polish and moved through the rest of the room dusting. There was never much dust in the rooms because they were dusted daily. It almost seemed a waste of time, but she wouldn't skip it. She didn't want Jean on her back, and it would be just her luck if the only day she didn't dust, the room would need it.

Her cloth slid over baseboard heaters, up the side of the dresser, and across its smooth oak top. Her hand worked in a circular motion, avoiding a bottle of Joy perfume, a rainbow collection of expensive cosmetics, false eyelashes and imported Parisian hand cream in a little cut crystal jar.

Her reflection was wan. She needed iron, maybe, or to sleep in a little longer. She'd been getting up extra early to catch the first bus to avoid her daughters' friends. A long, waxy smudge marred the reflection of the wig stand in the dresser mirror. She tugged a clean shammy from her overall, but jumped suddenly when she thought she saw the wig stand move.
Her flustered arm quivered, knocking the dainty crystal jar off the
dresser. The cream splattered at her feet. The air smelled of hyacinth. It
captivated her, even though she cursed. Her duster absorbed what it
could, but some of the cream found its way to her hands. She closed her
eyes. It felt like balm.

But what would she tell Jean? Should she say anything? It didn't
seem right not to. She rubbed and re-rubbed her hands together. When
had she last bought hand cream?

She'd spilled at least half the jar. It was unlikely it would go
unnoticed. If she didn't tell Jean, the guest would complain—but maybe
she wouldn't. This cream seemed to go an awfully long way. Just a bit of
it was more than enough.

She rubbed the excess from her hands onto her elbows, and then
some onto her neck. Her skin tingled. The innocent scent of hyacinth
reminded her of a time when the world seemed full of possibility, when
she was young and in high school, fantasizing about a romantic future of
luxury and travel.

When she emerged from this reverie, her eyes fixed on the black
wig's reflection. It had a blue gleam, an aura, it seemed. She couldn't
imagine what kind of woman would wear it—what kind of woman would
wear a wig at all, although she knew many women must wear them. She
herself had never tried a wig on in her life, and probably never would.
She'd feel too ridiculous. Even just trying one on. Even just for a few
seconds. But she couldn't help but wonder what she might look like in
this one.

Her hands quivered as she turned and reached for the wig stand. 
What if the guest came in when she had the wig on? How would she
explain herself? She pinched a few strands of the raven hair between
tense fingers. It didn't feel synthetic. There was a side part and a natural
sloping wave. She pulled her own hair into a knot, bent her head
delicately forward, and slid the wig on in one tidy motion. Abundant hair
tumbled heavily over her shoulders. She stared at her reflection,
amazed—then laughed out loud.

What would her children think? She could almost hear them. What
would Jean say? She didn't look anything at all like herself. She couldn't
believe who this was.

It seemed wicked to even contemplate, but a little bit of eye
makeup and those full false eyelashes really would make the
transformation complete. Her hands hovered over the dresser. That really
was too much, though. It was time to get on. God only knew how many
minutes she'd already lost.

She began removing the wig, but couldn't quite bring herself to do
it completely. A few more minutes. She had foregone her coffee break,
after all. She could still consider herself marginally ahead. What would
five more minutes be? She reached for the false eyelashes. They were like
little sticky spiders and they tickled as she stretched them over her lids.
What kind of woman could wear things like this? They were so unnatural,
but they looked so very exotic. She smiled at herself and reached for a lipstick.

Her teeth looked brighter, her withered, little mouth became generous. Her dull lead eyes turned green when she put on the shadow. She walked back and forth in front of the mirror. Her walk seemed decidedly different. Somehow, more poised. Was it the weight of the wig? What physical explanation could there be?

She walked toward the closet, glancing at her reflection over her shoulder. She liked to watch the hair swing back and forth as she walked. Such a complete and utter metamorphosis. She even looked as if she'd grown two or three inches. How was that possible?

Without realizing what she was doing, she opened the closet. Her eyes immediately found a tubular crimson dress with a white collar and two rows of bold, round black buttons. It was the type of dress she would never wear—never even look at in the store. It was the kind of dress that said "I'm gorgeous, but don't mess with me!" In a million years, she could never wear a dress like that. She'd look like a fool. For goodness' sake, even the thought of herself in a dress like that was embarrassing. Who was the woman staying in this room anyway? She couldn't recall seeing such a woman. She had to be a wealthy woman. How else would she be able to afford such expensive things?

Lynne slipped out of her bleached stained skirt and pulled her cleaning smock over her head. She stepped into the crimson dress before she even realized what she'd done. It felt smooth and perfect. At the
bottom of the closet were a pair of black leather high-heeled shoes that slid onto her feet as if they had been made for her. She began to walk around the room. Her reflection in a full-length mirror stopped her and she smiled. When was the last time she had actually smiled? But it was so amusing to see herself like this. And that smile. There was even something about that that added to the picture of this woman, whoever she was, that wore wigs and false eyelashes and dresses that said things.

This woman must be an executive, maybe owned several businesses. Maybe had a maid. Maybe a dozen men worked for her. Lynne turned around and around. She absorbed her image. She needed to know what this woman was. Where had she come from? She went to the closet again, and rifled through the briefcase. There was nothing there but a first-class plane ticket to Toronto and a stick of gum. Lynne unwrapped the gum and popped it into her mouth. She surveyed the room, enjoying the sweet surge of peppermint until her eyes fell upon the blue smock, creased in the heap along with the other clothing she'd shed.

She stood several seconds with the white gum wrapper in her hand. What had she done? She had stolen this stranger's property. She had put on this stranger's hand cream. My God, at this very moment, she was wearing this stranger's dress. She was wearing this stranger's wig. She tugged at the dress to unbutton it. And on top of all of that, she was now well behind in her work. How long had she been parading in front of the mirror? How long had it taken her to put on the dress? She had simply
lost track of time. How would she ever recover it? How could she explain herself? There was no excuse for what she'd done. Her fingers caressed the shiny buttons. She liked the dress.

Just then, there was the sound of quick, heavy steps in the hall, a clatter at the door. Lynne turned in terror as a bottle of furniture polish came flying across the room. What could she do? Throw herself at Jean's mercy, tell her she'd lost her mind? Jean stood at the door glowering, but suddenly, miraculously, Jean's expression changed. "Excuse me, madam," she coughed, "I didn't mean to barge in. I thought the maid was in here."

"Maid?" Lynne heard her voice say, "there's no maid here!"

"I'm so sorry," Jean apologized again and again, and gave a slight obsequious bow before shutting the door.

Lynne moved towards the mirror with the briefcase. She fluffed the black hair and tugged the crimson dress. She removed the plane ticket from the case, and collected the cosmetics from the dresser. She was suddenly aware that she no longer wondered about this woman. She had no time to wonder. There was a plane to catch.
Unlike "Abiding Peace," "The Black Wig" is written from a third-person limited omniscient viewpoint, and therefore the shadow of the character is not revealed so much by what she says and does not say, but rather by what the narrator tells us she thinks and does. As I watched, the shadow of the victim began taking shape and taking possession through numinous and collectively loaded objects: the wig, the hand cream. It seemed inevitable that Lynne must dress herself completely in the stranger's clothes. It also seemed inevitable that Jean must catch her at it. What I was most uncertain about and what did not reveal itself to me until the very moment was how she would respond to being confronted. If I had tried consciously to direct the movement of the story at this point, it is unlikely that the element of surprise achieved in the story would have occurred. It was the character Lynne herself, in my imagination, who responded to the confrontation by embracing the identity of the stranger. Her response surprised me, yet was completely consistent with the development of her shadow possession, of which I had throughout remained conscious.

The shadow is a useful concept for the writer of fiction because it provides a deeper understanding of the working of the human psyche and thus allows the rendering of even the most fantastic tale to resonate with "psychic authenticity." When the concept of the shadow is coupled with the writing process technique of "conscious listening," the unconscious is able to supply the story's necessary organic movement, presenting solutions and resolutions to fictional pieces that are at once inevitable, yet at the same time revelatory.

An understanding of the workings of the ego and the shadow immediately presents natural, psychologically authentic points of character conflict and interaction. Writing exercises in which students are asked to explore the workings of a character's ego and shadow can be interesting for students and can yield richer results than the conventional character sketch.

In another work, the children's novel *Percy and Marvin*, I attempted to describe and demonstrate, in a very literal way, the workings of the human shadow. I was fascinated by the Jungian idea that children can become conduits for their parent's unlived (and thus unconscious) lives, and the idea that one child might come to hold all the dark projections of the parents, becoming the scapegoat, while another child may
carry all the bright ones. Sylvia Brinton Perera (1986), in her book The Scapegoat Complex, explains: "In automatically assuming the identity of the bad, guilty and responsible one, the individual carries more than his or her personal share in any relationship. Whatever shadow material is not consciously claimed by the other is picked up and assumed to belong to the scapegoat's burden" (p. 31).

In my story, I present two cousins, one, Marvin, who carries all the negative familial and collective shadow, including sloppiness, inattentiveness, stupidity, and clumsiness, while his bright cousin, Percy, carries all of the conscious opposites. In effect, Marvin becomes Percy's dark side, since Percy, as the bright child, is unable to integrate any of his own shadow. I was interested in exploring the development of the shadow in a literal way. I knew that the brighter a person became, the larger shadow he casts. In this story, I began working with the idea of the scapegoat being satiated with another's un-integrated shadow. In the chapters I've included below, I attempted to take the un-integrated shadow to an extreme. What would happen when the scapegoat could no longer carry it? I was surprised with the organic movement of the story, how the story revealed the overly bright as disrupting the natural balance of light and darkness in the world.
Percy and Marvin

If I were to start this story by telling you about a perfectly pleasant boy named Percy, about his goodness and kindness, and the way he rescued small fluffy birds that tumbled from nests before they could fly, you may decide not to read any further. Perfectly pleasant people are rarely worth reading about.

But Percy was perfectly pleasant. He respected his elders, helped his teachers, made his bed first thing in the morning and put his dirty clothing in the laundry hamper last thing at night. He never spoke too loudly or too much, never told lies, never stuck bubble gum under his mother’s good dining room chairs. If he coughed, he covered his mouth. If he accidentally bumped into someone he said, “Excuse me.” He thanked everyone for everything. He was a model child. Yet, his story is interesting.

Percy had an aunt named Beatrice. Aunt Beatrice had a son named Marvin. “Why can’t you be more like Percy?” Aunt Beatrice told Marvin. When Aunt Beatrice spoke, she sounded just like a parrot, but Percy couldn’t hear this; he thought she sounded fine. Her voice was high and shrill. It sounded very much like a snow shovel scratching ice. “Why can’t you be more like Percy? Why can’t you be more like Percy?” she repeated
and repeated to Marvin, until his ears sealed over and his head felt like stone.

"Look at the way Percy keeps his room so nice, look at the way Percy combs his hair. Percy gets straight A's in school. Why can't you get straight A's? Why can't you be more like Percy? Why can't you be more like Percy? I just don't understand."

Marvin was nothing at all like Percy. He could not keep anything straight. Papers and crayons, clothing and books, littered the floor of his bedroom. Everyday he tried tidying things up. Everyday he resolved to be neater, but the things in his room refused to cooperate. As soon as he'd finished stacking and sorting, everything would jumble together again. Just like the way a sandcastle collapses in water, he thought, just like the way a dream disappears.

He would have liked to have been polite. He would have liked to say "excuse me" and "thank you," but sometimes the words just wouldn't come. Sometimes, although his hand was receiving a gift, or his body was bumping into some poor person, the other part of Marvin, the part that Marvin would say really was him, was extremely far away.

His report cards were always bad, the teacher's comments always distressing. "Marvin needs to spend more time listening and less time dreaming." "Marvin's desk is a dump!" "Marvin rarely arrives for class on time." "Marvin has not yet once remembered to bring his gym clothes for PE."
Marvin's handwriting was appalling. Somehow he always managed to get big inky blotches all over the page. When he went to wipe them away, they'd spread. His y's became l's, his i's became t's, and all of the white space above and below his letters filled with smudgy blue marks that made Marvin think of stars in a night sky and fanning comet tails shooting across galaxies.

Ink as blue as blueberry jam discoloured his fingers, stained his cheeks. "What on earth do you have on your face?" his teacher would ask, knowing perfectly well it was ink. "Go to the bathroom, wash it off." And Marvin would slink to the bathroom. He would scrub at the blue patches on his hands and face. Damp paper towels would fall to the floor. Soap would bubble and froth and slosh over the wash basin.

"What are you doing to my nice clean bathroom," the janitor would shout. "Get out of here! Never come back!"

Marvin would slink to his classroom. He would try inconspicuously to take his seat. Without fail he would trip and would stumble, the brown metal garbage pail would clang across the room. Kids would roar with laughter. Their eyes would streak with tears of glee.

"I'm afraid I can't see the humour in this," his teacher would scold, frustrated. "Please Marvin take your seat!" And Marvin would rise from the shoe-streaked tiles where he'd landed, and he'd do his best to straighten his wrinkled shirt. Solemnly, he'd shuffle to his disorderly desk, but usually he'd trip once more, before safely planting himself down.
It's hard to believe that cousins can be so different, but Marvin and Percy were different. They were as different as rich Belgium chocolate and limburger cheese.

Wherever Percy went he always walked confidently with solid, certain strides. He expected the best for himself. Every object he encountered cooperated with him. Doors did not stick and fight him and catch his clothing when he tried to walk through, furniture never tripped him, sharp objects never stabbed him. When he ate dinner, food stayed in one place on his plate; it did not slide like a hockey puck and leap like a frog onto his lap. People liked Percy. They liked having Percy around. "Percy is a pleasure" teachers wrote in his report cards. "Every classroom should have a Percy." And Percy's mother, Polly, was just as pleased and proud as punch.

"Do you know what my Percy did?" she'd boast to Aunt Bearice, "My Percy mowed the lawn, without my asking. On Mother's Day, he brought me breakfast in bed."

"What a wonderful boy!" Aunt Beatrice enthused. "I don't know why Marvin can't be more like Percy! It just doesn't make sense."

Now you might think that all of this praise for Percy would cover Marvin's heart with poison, deaden all of his good feelings, and creep like bitter frost over his brain. But Marvin had a remarkable ability for avoiding poison of all kinds. Whenever poison threatened, he'd automatically slip away. He'd travel to Nairobi or Istanbul for buried treasure or board a rocket and go play hopscotch on the moon.
Sometimes he took to the high seas in a ship, or if a friendly dolphin were passing, he'd jump on its back. Yet this ability of his, this gift which saved Marvin from becoming full of hate, was the very quality in him which made him appear to the world as such a careless, thoughtless, infuriating boy.

"Are you listening to me?" Aunt Beatrice screeched at Marvin. "I'm asking you a question."

Marvin's body was standing in Aunt Polly's living room. It was standing against a wall, and blending very nicely with the warm beige paint. If you didn't know Marvin was there, you would have missed him altogether, but his mother knew he was there, and she wanted him to tell her why he'd forgotten Mother's Day and why he never did anything without being told.

The part of Marvin, which was Marvin, had slipped away. It had gone back in time. It was watching the dinosaurs, and the way they stretched their long, graceful necks over the scraggy tops of trees.

"Are you listening to me? Are you listening?" Marvin's mother shrieked. "Look at your cousin Percy! Look at the way he helps his mother!" Percy was smiling and setting the dining room table, knives on the right, forks on the left. He was folding the linen table napkins into triangles, wrapping them neatly into decorative cones. "Such an amazing son!" Marvin's mother crooned. "Why can't you be more like Percy? Why can't you be more like Percy? I will never understand!"
There was something else about Marvin that his mother would never understand, something she had no idea about, something that would have terrified her if ever she’d learned. Along with Marvin’s remarkable propensity to slip away to other times and places, this world, where his body remained, had just recently begun to reveal itself to him in the most odd and alarming ways.

For example, when he tried to paint a portrait of his mother, an art class assignment for Mother’s Day, he covered the top of her head with shapely green feathers, and instead of a nose, fashioned a beautiful black curving beak.

“Good gracious! What on earth are you painting?” his teacher scolded. “You can’t give a picture like that as a gift! You’ve made your mother look like a parrot!”

“I have?” Marvin murmured, knowing he’d painted his mother exactly as he saw her, but not knowing that everyone else did not see her this way.

“Don’t you think a picture like this would hurt your mother’s feelings?” his teacher asked seriously.

“I didn’t think about it,” Marvin murmured again.

“Well, then you are a thoughtless boy,” his teacher said, and took his picture from his easel and tore it into tiny shreds.

Right now, as Marvin watched his cousin setting the table, he could see a very bright light emanating all around him. It was not the first time Marvin had noticed it, nor the way it grew and magnified as Marvin’s
mother and Aunt Polly spoke. It reminded Marvin of the summer sun, or angels’ halos and bonfires. It was bright. So bright in fact that it hurt Marvin’s eyes.

“It must be awfully warm and uncomfortable,” Marvin considered, and thought perhaps he’d ask Percy about it, but then thinking better of his question, decided to put on a pair of sun glasses, and just watch instead.

“Just don’t stand there staring,” Marvin’s mother shouted at him, “Help your Aunt Polly serve the meal! Why do I have to tell you everything?”

Marvin obediently pulled himself from the spectacle of Percy’s splitting light and went to help. He put four tumblers on the table and retrieved a pitcher of ice water from the kitchen and filled every glass. The ice cubes melted quickly in the tumblers, and Marvin was not surprised, for the glow around Percy had extended so much that it seemed to be swirling about the plates and dishes, jumping like sudden sun spots from the tips of his fingers and skittering like fiery tidally winks over the plates. He hadn’t been prepared for the sudden shift in illumination, for after looking at Percy, even with sunglasses on, his eyes found it difficult to adjust to the pervasive dullness that obscured the kitchen.

He tripped over a carpet at the threshold. He reeled into Aunt Polly. Gravy and potatoes hit the wall. An entire roast of beef bounced across the linoleum tile floor where Marvin ended up, flat on his back.
“Are you alright, dear?” Aunt Polly asked sweetly. She was hovering, with the face of a rooster, over Marvin.

“I’m fine, I think,” Marvin said, blinking. The sunglasses skewed on the bridge of his nose.

Marvin’s mother came flying in. “What on earth’s going on in here! Marvin! What on earth have you done?”

“It’s all right Bea,” Aunt Polly soothed, “We can rinse the roast off. I’m sure there’s enough potatoes and gravy for us each to have one helping anyway.”

It was just as Marvin’s Aunt was saying these words that Marvin turned his head toward the dining room. Percy’s light had become unbearably flaring and although it was impossible to look upon Percy directly, from Marvin’s vantage he could see the expanse of glowing floor. It made him think of barn fires, of golden shafts of wheat enflamed. And then he saw them. Just for a moment, but as surely as anything he’d ever seen in his life, a host of hideous faces, climbing out from the floor, contorting and grimacing, grabbing at Percy’s light with gaping mouths and ghastly fingers.

“Look out Percy!” Marvin screamed, over the prating of his mother, over the boasting of his Aunt. “Look out Percy! Look OUT! They’re trying to eat your light!”

But no one could see why he was shouting. No one could understand. Everyone stood mute and earnest witnessing Marvin bellow. Witnessing something they would rather not have seen at all.
Imagine, if you will, an untidy twelve-year-old boy on a gravy-splashed, potato-mashed, roast beef-bashed floor, rolling and writhing, roaring and reverberating, like a ferocious jitterbug, and you will understand why Marvin’s mother phoned an ambulance right away.

“A seizure, I say, a seizure. My son is having a seizure,” she screeched into the telephone, while Aunt Beatrice fumbled with a spoon.

“His tongue!” Aunt Beatrice shouted, “We have to stop him from swallowing his tongue!” She knelt down on the slippery floor, grabbed hold of Marvin’s hollering head, and placed the spoon in his wide open mouth.

“Uuuuurcy!” he cried, “Uuuuurcy!”

Aunt Beatrice thought he was begging for mercy, which she judged rather rude and ungrateful, considering she was helping him.

Percy could feel his knees turn to rubber and his hands begin to twitch. He couldn’t see what Marvin saw. He couldn’t tell what was making him tremble. He didn’t even know about the light that blazed from his body as if he were a human torch, nor could he ever have imagined the miniature globular creatures, dark as ravens’ wings, who surged and vaulted from beneath the floor to feed upon it with their ghastly gluttonous mouths. Yet Percy knew something terrible was happening to him. He knew Marvin knew, and was trying to help. But Percy could do nothing. He stood watching Marvin, totally transfixed. He couldn’t speak, nor move, nor even blink his eyes.
Marvin thrashed in Aunt Beatrice’s arms; his body wiggled like a frightened snake’s.

“Calm yourself,” Aunt Beatrice said sharply. “You just calm yourself, young man!”

Percy’s light looked to Marvin like a blanket woven from sun, and he watched as the infinite flow of creatures, each about the size and shape of a new born baby’s fist, snapped at the light with bright, chattering teeth, creating dark stars which they crawled through, then burrowed down, past Percy’s flesh.

An ambulance siren shrieked up the street. Marvin contorted, trying to keep his eyes on Percy, as Aunt Beatrice continued holding him with the spoon squarely placed across his frantic tongue. Marvin’s mother flew to the front door and seconds later dragged two ambulance attendants through to the kitchen. One of the attendants was a tall lean man, with a moustache that looked like a little brown bush. The other had a hectic corkscrew ponytail that slapped her shoulders whenever she moved her head. Everyone’s eyes were focused on Marvin. Nobody was noticing Percy, whose body was vibrating as if it were full of bees, and whose face had assumed an expression of terror.

“How did this boy come to be on the floor?” asked the man, as the other attendant tried to loosen the spoon from Aunt Beatrice’s grip and remove it from Marvin’s mouth.

“He’ll swallow his tongue!” Aunt Beatrice cried, still clutching Marvin’s head.
“I think he’ll be O.K.” the attendant offered as she reached into her pocket for a miniature flashlight.

If only they had turned their attention for one moment to Percy, they would have seen his skin turning green. They would have witnessed him jumping and jarring, his entire frame skidding and sloping, as he reeled in a silent spasm.

He felt as if icy insects had suddenly infiltrated his spine and were gnawing to the core of its marrow, yet Percy could not scream. He could not even ask for help. His lips were as set as crystallized stone.

“What’s your name?” the ambulance attendant asked Marvin, as she flashed the probing beam first into his right eye and then his left.

“Marvin,” he gulped, “but Percy’s the one who needs your help!”

“How many fingers am I holding up,” the attendant asked.

“Four and a thumb,” Marvin said, “but it’s Percy you should be asking. It’s Percy you should be looking at. Percy’s light is being eaten alive!”

No one turned to look at Percy.

“How old are you?” the attendant asked.

Marvin’s mother answered, “Twelve as of May.”

“We need your son to answer the questions,” the other attended explained.

“Oh...I see,” Marvin’s mother said, her fingers nervously drumming the air.

“Do you know your address?” the attendant persisted.
“Please look at Percy,” he begged the attendant, grasping her hand, for Percy was now completely transformed into a pale rigid pole of a boy.

Aunt Beatrice gave Marvin’s head a small shake.

“He had quite a fall!” Marvin’s mother muttered, then blushed.

“It’s not a concussion,” the attendant said, switching off her small flashlight, “but we should take him into the hospital for observation.” Her ponytail swung out like a fan as she turned to confer with her partner.

“But his light! His light!” Marvin screamed, reaching past the attendants, reaching out towards Percy, in the direction of the dining room window and the dimming sun.

Percy stood in the dining room as still as a stave with dead black eyes unblinking. Now only the most acute observer would have noticed the ramrod stiffness of his spine, the unyielding clench of his fists, the clamp of his jaw, and the glint of his teeth, which shone like a hoop of square blades. The creatures had devoured all of his light now, and had wormed their way into his soul. They had set up house in his body, like a band of black parasites. They had, at last, taken control.

The attendants gently lifted Marvin. Together they carefully carried him away.

“It was quite a fall, he took!” Marvin’s mother shouted, following them to the ambulance. “He’s not usually half this odd!” she lied.

The attendants fastened Marvin onto a stretcher with straps that gripped his legs and arms.
"You don't understand!" Marvin shouted. He begged, pleaded, and finally sobbed, but nothing he said would change the course of the ambulance, which tore off to the hospital in the fading light of day. Nor could anything change the terrible course of events now set in motion.

Marvin's and Percy's mothers nervously shifted at the living room window long after the ambulance had disappeared.

"We should go to the hospital, I suppose," Marvin's mother said.

"I think we should," Percy's mother agreed.

"But what about dinner?" said Percy's voice. It was Percy's voice exactly, except for the strange emanation of frost it spread, for the little chill it sent through the house, for the way it made the hair on the back of Aunt Polly's hands bristle, then stand erect.

"Oh, Percy," his mother smiled indulgently. "Should we really be thinking of dinner at a time like this?" For the first time since Marvin's accident Percy's mother turned to look at her boy.

Percy smiled a smile his mother had never seen. There was a sharp gleam to his teeth, and his lips cleaved to his cheeks as if they had frozen there. His eyes possessed a dark hypnotic shimmer. "It's just that you and Aunt Polly have gone to so much trouble," he sighed.

Aunt Polly preened and gave an anxious squawk.

"And the roast smells so good," Percy continued, "and everything's still warm." Percy's eyes had turned a liquid brown his voice had become as mild as honey.
His mother fidgeted as she briefly gazed through the living room window. "It does seem a shame," she muttered.

"Well, really, there's no sense in wasting," Aunt Polly said definitively.

Percy's mother found herself nodding.

"No sense in wasting at all," Percy echoed, re-casting each word, and claiming them. Making each word his own, for the darkness that now controlled him, insisted upon taking any dark thought that might feed it.

He had already set the dining room table, and in moments he produced a platter of finely sliced beef, a bowl of mashed potatoes, a green garden salad and a basket of dinner rolls to grace the cloth.

"The gravy," Aunt Polly called, "we can't forget the gravy."

Not a word was said of Marvin.

"Please pass the butter," Percy purred, and both his mother and Aunt Polly tugged on the butter dish at the same time and accidentally knocked the salad to the floor.

"Why you clumsy oaf!" his mother shrieked at his aunt. She had never spoken to her sister in such a way before, and couldn't explain what had come over her now, but felt such a rush of excitement that she persisted in shrieking. "You were always clumsy! You never could do anything right!"

The corners of Percy's mouth slowly crawled into a smile. He reached for the butter himself, and began buttering a bread roll.
“What about you? Mrs. All Thumbs and Two Left Feet?” Aunt Polly shrieked. “You weren’t even allowed to take skating lessons, because you were so uncoordinated.”

“That’s a lie, and you know it!” Percy’s mother shouted. “I didn’t get skating lessons, because mother and father said only one of us could, and you cried and screamed blue murder until they had to give them to you. You were always a spoiled rotten brat!” Percy’s mother brought her fist down hard into the bowl of mashed potatoes. “Now see what you’ve made me do?”

Percy chewed slowly on his roll. His eyes glittered with delight as he watched his aunt and mother argue on and on into the evening, while Marvin, in hospital, poor forgotten Marvin, disembarked upon one of the most frightening experiences of his young unhappy life.
Besides literalizing the psychological dimension of the shadow and discovering how it might behave in extreme situations, I also discovered in the writing of these chapters how just by entertaining the concept of the shadow one can add complexity to good and evil characters. Often, student writers struggle to render “believable characters” and think that this obviates the possibility of “villains” and “heroes.” Working with the Jungian conception of the shadow in one’s writing can be like working with the colours black and white on an artist’s palette. Very dark villains and very bright heroes can still be “believable characters”—it is just a question of finding them in their natural light and working with shadow dynamics in such a way as to make extreme positive and negative responses psychologically plausible.

**Projection and Possession**

“Possession” and “projection” are two Jungian concepts which may be of considerable value to student writers towards improving the authenticity of their fiction and developing greater psychological maturity in themselves. Shadow “projection” and “possession” were introduced earlier. Here I wish to explain these terms at greater length and give examples of how these “psychological facts,” as Jungian analyst Marie Louise von Franz called them, can be introduced in a Creative Writing classroom. Once students have a basic understanding of the ego, the persona and the shadow, a more detailed acquaintance with how Jung saw the functioning of the unconscious will allow students to incrementally build upon their knowledge of the inner world.

Jung believed that contents of the unconscious do not just lie dormant, awaiting integration, but can be projected outwards, or can overwhelm ego-consciousness and take possession of an individual. In the first instance of projection, there are many avenues the instructor might encourage students to explore. One could begin, for example, by considering fictional setting within the context of projection. *A Handbook to Literature* explains setting as “the physical and sometimes spiritual, background against which the action of a Narrative (novel, drama, short story, poem) takes place. The elements which go to make up a setting are: (1) the actual geographical location, its topography, scenery, and such physical arrangements as the location of the windows and doors in a room; (2)
the occupation and daily manner of living of the characters; (3) the time or period in which the action takes place, e.g., epoch in history, season of the year, etc.; (4) the general environment of the characters, e.g. religious, mental, moral, social and emotional conditions through which the people in the narrative move" (Holman, 1972, p. 491).

Conventional books on writing inform us that setting helps to orient the reader—it “fixes a work of fiction in place and time” (Minot, p. 219). Setting “is intended to reflect a character’s personality, create a mood, or provide a contrast with another scene” (p. 221). Unhappy characters, for example, will see their world in a bleak way. When they look outside the living room window of their suburban home, they will not notice the beautiful sunset or the daffodils in the garden, but may instead see the dead cherry tree, the scraps of garbage on the lawn, the peeling paint on the house across the street. Student writers will most probably be familiar with the idea of setting as a potential reflection of a character’s inner turmoil or simply as a reflection of the character’s personality. Consider, for example, the following dialogue between Adrian, Sebastian, Antonio and Gonzalo in William Shakespeare’s (1998) The Tempest and what it tells us of their characters. They have just escaped drowning and are on an island looking for the king’s son:

Adrian: The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.
Sebastian: As if it had lungs, and rotten ones.
Antonio: Or as ‘twere perfumed by a fen.
Gonzalo: Here is everything advantageous to life.
Antonio: True; save means to live.
Sebastian: Of that there’s none, or little.
Gonzalo: How lush and lusty the grass looks! How green!
Antonio: The ground indeed is tawny. (p. 29)

James Hollis (1998) writes: “All projection occurs unconsciously, of course, for the moment one observes, ‘I have made a projection,’ one is already in the process of taking it back. More commonly, we only begin to reclaim our purchase on consciousness when the Other fails to catch, hold, reflect our projection. If there is a central law of the psyche, it is that what is unconscious will be projected” (p. 35). From the outset, writing students who understand the subjectivity of human consciousness—those who know that every character, depending on his or her personal nature will perceive the world in a different way and will project upon it in a different way—will be in a much better position to render authentic fiction than those who hold notions of universally objective
perceptions. In instances where universally objective perceptions seem appropriate—for example, in the settings of stories with omniscient narrators—the writing student will discover a subjectivity which exists in the story itself. When put to the test, these stories will show themselves to be every bit as vulnerable to the psychological dynamics of projection and possession as are their characters.

The Jungian concept of projection can expand the student writer’s understanding of subjectivity—for now, the external world is not only a reflection of a character’s conscious struggles or personality but is also a projection of unconscious contents. The unconscious content can belong to a single character, to a group of characters, or simply to a situation. Furthermore, unlike reflection, projection is implicitly dynamic. It requires, and persists in attempting to achieve, a conscious reconciliation of dispersed contents.

Possession, on the other hand, exists when unconscious contents overwhelm our ego consciousness, making us behave in ways we do not consciously control. When we act hastily, in a passion or destructively, we are often acting in a possession. When we believe ourselves to have “acted out of character” or when, upon later reflection, we are stunned by our former actions, it is likely that we have been “possessed.” Possession, like projection, works to integrate unconscious content by making us question our behaviour. For example, someone may believe she is a good mother. She is conscious of loving her children totally, of wanting only the best for them, and the thought of harming them in any way is something she would never contemplate. One day, however, when one of her children arrives home from school with a low mark on her report card, the mother becomes irate and shouts and spanks her. On later reflection, she regrets her action and feels embarrassed by it. She realizes that she was acting out of control and that the low mark could not justify her reaction. At this point, she has an opportunity to integrate the unconscious content that possessed her by coming to understand that she is not entirely “the good mother” she believes herself to be. By investigating her actions, she may have to face the fact that perhaps there is a dark side to this “good mother”—perhaps there is a side which exploits her children’s abilities and talents in order to feed her own self-esteem. Perhaps there is also a strong will to have power over her children, to have them reflect her and her unlived potentials, instead of her encouraging them to live their own lives. By consciously acknowledging these negative qualities of herself that influence her mothering, she gains more control over the contents that possess her; the next time her child shows her a low mark on the report card, she may feel the possession bubbling up.
inside of her, but because she now knows that what she is really responding to is her own needs, it is much easier for her to take control of the feeling and stop it from doing harm. Often, however, people do not gain consciousness from their possessions. Instead, they either attempt to justify or deny them—or only go so far by excusing them as some form of temporary insanity. If possessions are not investigated, they continue and often worsen. For the student writer, understanding how the characters and the situations they write about might be experiencing and expressing such dynamics can be both mind-expanding and creatively empowering. Besides possibly gaining personally by investigating their own thoughts and responses, students will find that even the dullest, clichéd and superficial characters become infused with an internal energy and conflict when these psychological concepts are considered.

In the following stories that I authored, "Slick," "Flight," and "Resurrection," I focused specifically on the concepts of projection and possession. My main character, Jimmy Robinson, is a younger brother who has projected unconscious qualities onto his older brother, Kevin. Jimmy, because he attracts the negative projections of the collective, cannot integrate the positive unconscious qualities that are necessary for his evolution. These qualities, which he projects upon Kevin, have generally to do with the heroic masculine. Kevin "the man" Robinson is viewed by his brother as an unflinching champion who cannot be outdone or defeated by anyone. This projection is so strong for Jimmy that when Kevin is killed he cannot accept that Kevin has actually succumbed to death. Along with this general projection of the heroic, more specifically Jimmy projects upon Kevin supreme problem-solving abilities and the skills of a superstar escape artist. Although he is unconsciously problem solving and escaping all of the time, Jimmy has no conscious awareness of his own great abilities and skills in these areas. Later, after Jimmy's car accident, another figure from his past who shares similar problem-solving and escape artists qualities, Jack Goulet, appears as an interior voice.

Jimmy revealed himself to me as similar to a boy I had known in grade school. He was fatherless, lived in low-income housing, and was always getting into trouble. Though in real life, this boy had no brothers, he tended to hero-worship older boys who, like Kevin, had a certain street celebrity. Kevin in the story is a receptacle for Jimmy’s projections, although initially I was uncertain of what these projections might specifically be. Because Jimmy was fatherless and Kevin was an older male, it made sense to explore Jimmy’s heroic masculine projections—projections he would be unable to cast upon a
father. What emerged from the exploration was that there were these two areas—escape and problem-solving—that seemed to be particularly valued by Jimmy. As I thought about this, it became clearer to me that the unconscious would be urgently demanding these things be integrated, so that Jimmy could use them to extricate himself from the psychologically destructive situation—both socio-economic and emotional—he was in.

I also wanted to understand better what occurs with one’s projections when the object that carries them dies or is inaccessible. In this instance, Jimmy could not accept the death of Kevin, and this led to the arrest of the natural evolutionary process. A projection is much more difficult to re-collect if the one it adheres to is no longer available. In order to acknowledge the projection as a piece of oneself, one must have the object present to hold the projection up against. If Jimmy had accepted Kevin’s death, it might have freed him to project the unconscious contents that he urgently needed to integrate onto another object. Because he couldn’t accept Kevin’s death, however, conscious integration became impossible.

In “Resurrection,” Jimmy’s failure consciously to integrate his own heroic problem-solving and escape artist abilities result in his possession. The possession here is very literal. It is the historic Tenskwatawa, brother of Shawnee chief Tecumseh, who possesses Jimmy. Tenskwatawa, whose legend ascribes to him these very qualities that Jimmy is unable to integrate, we find living in the unconscious of the city of Windsor, Ontario. He lives there because the aboriginal past is not consciously acknowledged. In fact, burial sites are cemented over and/or turned into subdivisions, as was the Fontainebleau subdivision, where both the real-life Jimmy and I spent our childhoods. In this instance, I was exploring what occurs to a character whose very weak ego is weakened even further. Those with weak egos are always subject to possession, as ego boundaries cannot withstand the strength of unconscious contents. Perhaps in most instances, it would be the personal unconscious content that overwhelms, but, in this instance, the overwhelming unconscious contents belonged to the city.
Slick

The bulldozers gouged at the prostrate earth, wrestled with rocks and intractable roots, ladled banks of slippery clay from saffron holes, then drove away. The projects went up like red brick boxes and filled with dirt-poor families: two or three kids a unit, one single mom.

A school was built, a convenience store, a park and playground where people walked their dogs, where mounds of excrement killed off grass, hardened in the fierce heat of summer, crunched under children’s running shoes.

There were twin hills between the projects and the school, breasts of the earth, padded with thick pastry snow in the winter. Toboggans tore from their peaks to their base, slid under the chain link fence, swerved out into traffic across the road. And as Jimmy Robinson ran past them now, he thought of his brother, Kevin. He saw his brother Kevin’s face, pushed in like rubber. Saw his brother Kevin’s head cracked like the shell of a nut under the wheel of a skidding car.

Jimmy Robinson was trouble at school. He picked fights at recess, chased girls and knocked them down, pinned their thrashing arms and legs with his strong skinny body and lifted their skirts.

“Almost rape,” is how one of the girl’s mothers described it before she withdrew her daughter from the school, sold their brand new house, moved to Saskatchewan. Old Bristle Top, the principal at Jimmy’s school,
beat him with a leather strap and sent him home. Jimmy’s mother begged for Jimmy to be taken back. “He ain’t been the same since Kevin got killed,” she said, although she knew she wasn’t being completely truthful. Jimmy had always been Jimmy.

Every day for two years, with the exception of weekends and those days Jimmy had skipped, Old Bristle Top had hauled him into his office, made him drop his pants with his face to the corner and touch his toes. “You know the drill,” he’d tell him, before he started the beating. His voice rose behind Jimmy. He’d pause after he spoke, while Jimmy waited, his bare ass thrust in the air. “I didn’t do nothin,’” Jimmy shouted. It was the only way he could stop anticipating the sting of that first strike. Jimmy braced himself even though he tried to relax. He knew relaxing was better. He knew the searing bite of the strap was a hundred times worse if he tensed. Today, because he was sure he was going to get thrown out anyway, he’d decided to skip the beating and go straight home.

The toboggan hills were desolate. Snow wrapped them, like the marzipan on Christmas cake. Jimmy recalled how when they’d first moved here, his brother Kevin, Kevin the King, had come rushing down the first hill, a blizzard of white speed soaring through the sky on a sheet of corrugated steel. He was a streak, a shooting star, a blur of acceleration. All the kids screamed, mouths open, eyes jumping. “Go, Kev,” Jimmy shouted from the hill’s peak. “That’s THE man! Kevin Robinson!”
Kevin was always working to increase his speed. He waxed the bottom of his makeshift sled. He used a block of paraffin instead of plain old waxed paper. He took a running start, threw himself forward onto the bumpy raft, shot into the air, then into another world.

How many times had that sled gone down that hill? How many times had Jimmy watched Kevin moving faster than the speed of sound over the slick white glass, the snow and then everything suddenly slowing down. The old brown station wagon crawling up the street, the other kids tumbling from their sleds, shouting, pointing. “Kevin!” the name—the word—swelling from his mouth as if it were not sound at all but a pink chewing gum bubble that just kept growing bigger even without his breath.

There was a funeral after that. A boy’s body in Kevin’s casket dressed like a nerd. Kids who used to badmouth Kevin crying like idiots. “It’s not Kevin,” Jimmy said. His mother grabbed him by the shoulder, pulled him away from the casket into an alcove outside of the ladies’ room. “You shut up!” she told him, tears poised like knife blades in her eyes. “Have respect,” her voice grew quaky. And then she said the only words she truly ever regretted saying in her life. Words, she thought about often, but never took back. “It’s your fault he’s dead.”

Jimmy didn’t believe Kevin was dead. He didn’t believe the body in the casket was Kevin. “It’s all bullshit,” he shouted at his mother, ripping away from her. He knew it was bullshit because he’d seen what happened. He’d seen the station wagon. He’d seen how slowly it moved,
how it twirled like a flower, how it bump, bumped, over Kevin's sled. Then Jimmy was at the bottom of the hill. He was standing over Kevin, looking at his dented face, his cracked skull, his open, awe-struck eyes. He knew Kevin wasn't dead because there was no blood—only a trickle of fluid, just like a thin grey vein in the snow. A police car came, an ambulance, hundreds of people gathered.

"THE man Kevin Robinson," Jimmy shouted over the din of sirens. "Astronaut Kevin Robinson." He grabbed the mangled sled, rushed to the top of the hill and threw himself on it. Steam rose from his bare hands, from his face. His breath burned him like the exhaust of a rocket. He soared into the pink sky. He knew the bottom of the sled wasn't even touching the snow.

A policeman stopped him at the bottom of the hill. Stood in front of him, so he had to roll. Kevin rolled too, he thought. The policeman lifted him from the snow, brought him to his feet. "That boy in the ambulance... he your brother?"

"The amazing Kevin Robinson" was all that would come out, "daredevil Kevin Robinson."

"Come with me, son," the policeman said.

Jimmy's mother worked in a coffee shop on Oulette Street. She wiped the Formica counters with neat bleach, polished the coffeepots with yellow shammies until they were blinding. Two nights a week she worked as a waitress in a topless bar.
She worried about Jimmy more now that Kevin was gone. She worried about him shoplifting and having to go to court, about him vandalizing property and breaking into other people's units. She worried about him setting a bonfire in their living room. He'd tried it once before. Doused the old hide-a-bed with butane and tossed on a lit match. The flames vaulted and curled and left an indelible black shadow on the ceiling before they sputtered to nothing. The firefighters hauled the hide-a-bed out onto a patch of grass, hosed it down. For days smoke billowed and rolled off the couch.

"Don't you go getting in trouble when I'm gone!" his mother told him every morning before she left for work. As an added precaution she grabbed the curve of his ear and pulled him so close to her face that he could feel the beads of spit and nicotine in her words. "You get in trouble one more time and there'll be hell to pay!"

Jimmy skidded over the opaque parking lot of the housing project. He fumbled to retrieve the key that hung from a grey shoelace around his neck, then blew on his fingers for warmth so he could unlock the bright orange door of the unit. He smoked half a dozen cigarettes and drank a quarter of a mickey of stolen whiskey. He'd burn the expulsion notice when it came, but right now he called the school secretary with a put-on voice.

"I'm Jimmy Robinson's uncle," he rasped. "The little bastard just told us what he did. Don't you worry, we're gonna fix him good this time." After he hung up, he found Kevin's old pocket knife, went outside
and pried open the plastic box that housed the phone wires and slashed
them.

“No calls tonight, ma,” he said and tucked the knife into his fraying
coat pocket.

For a long time, he stood on Queen Elizabeth Street, hitch hiking,
but when no one picked him up, he smashed the coin box of a pay phone
at the convenience store, stole the quarters and got on a bus. He was
thinking of going right down to the Detroit River, seeing if he could get
rid of the rest of the money. He’d bought some gin there once for cheap.
Picked up a carton of Marlboroughs and a six pack of American beer from
a guy fresh out of the Duty Free. It had been a blistering hot summer’s
day and he lay between two columns, next to the abutment of the
Ambassador Bridge drinking and smoking his brains out. He’d expected
Kevin then. Thought Kevin would come. “I know you’re there,” he shouted
at one of the columns. “I know you’re somewhere!” His voice echoed,
sounding loud and watery.

The bus lurched to a stop at an intersection, then began its slow
curve down Quebec Street. The neighbourhood was dead, just a couple of
garbage men and a postie, a girl in high-heeled boots and a fake fur
jacket pushing a big blue baby buggy. And then, Kevin. It was Kevin
walking into a McDonald’s. Jimmy knew it was Kevin, even though he
didn’t see his face: long stringy hair, wiry body, loping walk. Jimmy
hammered the bus cord ringer like a manic. The bus driver kept driving.
“Stop, you jerk!” Jimmy shouted, but the bus driver didn’t even slow down
until two stops later. When he finally did stop he told Jimmy, “if you ever call me jerk again I’ll rearrange your face.” Jimmy ran back to Quebec Street, back to McDonald’s. He yelled at the assistant manager. “Kevin Robinson. He was just in here. Where’d he go?”

The assistant manager was wiping up cola with a stringy white mop and looked confused.

“Don’t pretend you don’t know what the fuck I’m talking about. Kevin Robinson! He was just in here! Houdini Robinson!”

“He owe you money?” the assistant manager asked.

“Forget it,” Jimmy said finally, realizing the guy wasn’t going to talk. Kevin had probably paid him to keep quiet. He’d always hated living in the projects. He hated living with their mother. He wouldn’t want anyone making him go back. He probably had a room at the YMCA, or maybe a cheap bachelor apartment. “First chance I get, I’m gone,” he used to say.

“Can I come?” Jimmy would ask.

“I’ll think about it,” Kevin said.

Jimmy expected Kevin to have made contact by now, to be waiting for him someplace. He was getting pissed off that it was taking so long.

He ordered two cheeseburgers, fries and a coke, counted out six dollars in quarters.

“You rob someone’s piggy bank?” the assistant manager asked.
“What if I did?” Jimmy answered. He sat at a table across from an old man in a dark coat and ate without tasting anything. Afterward, he walked the rest of the way downtown.

Although it was freezing cold, it had stopped snowing. The sun ricocheted off reefs of white. Jimmy extended the red fingers of his hands, stretched them to see if he could still feel, and trudged through the drifts, the ridges that cars had made, the half shovelled sidewalks, coming at last to the dime store, the Metropol.

It used to be “the Metropolitan” until four letters fell off the sign. It smelled like plastic toys in the Metropol, like old wooden floors and soda pop, even though the soda fountain hadn’t been functional for close to 20 years. It smelled like old penny candy, like jars of glass, like cough medicine. It smelled of cheap linen and rubber hot water bottles, slippers and sandals from China and India, lavender cologne.

There was a long oblong bin filled with acrylic gloves. Two pairs for the price of one. Jimmy picked up a black pair, broke the clear plastic thread that joined them, and pushed his cold hands into their tight warmth. He strolled down the aisles, lifting things from the shelves: a box of matches, a butane lighter. There was only one bored salesgirl at the till, a twist of brown hair twirling in her fingers as she looked out through the store front window, and then down at her watch. There were only a few customers in the aisles and they all ignored Jimmy, an old couple and a fat woman and a man in white shiny shoes who looked like a gangster.
Jimmy went to the back of the store, past the cheap ladies housecoats, the overly bright shirts. He went down a long narrow hallway and stopped at the men's room in front of the exit. There was a young man in there, a clean-cut American guy, nice suit, smelled like cloves and sunflowers. He told Jimmy he was married, that he was only in town for the day. He'd heard about this place, this washroom. He asked Jimmy if he needed some money.

"Queer!" Jimmy laughed as he pissed in the urinal. He kept laughing, even after the crestfallen man was gone. He kept laughing and smiled like a hyena back in the store where he tried on pairs of sunglasses and looked at himself in a skinny rectangular mirror. He thought of the queer driving over the border. Imagined him not being able to breathe until he got home. Imagined him crying, telling his glassy-eyed wife, "I love you so much." Then Jimmy pocketed a pair of silver sunglasses and moved to the next aisle.

A sharp blast of air struck Jimmy's cheek. The principal of his school, Old Bristle Top, stood at the door of the Metropol kicking snow off his galoshes.

Jimmy slid behind neon pink and green dresses and watched Old Bristle Top striding up an aisle. He wondered if he'd followed him here. His gloved fingers walked over the matches in his pocket, the lighter, the silver sunglasses. They walked over quarters and the blade of Kevin's sharp knife. He began to remember the thud of the chair that sailed from his hands that morning, that pirouetted and hung for a moment like a
steel dancer before it hit his teacher, Mrs. Kennedy, and she crumpled in a heap on the floor.

If ever there was a time for Houdini Kevin Robinson to make an appearance it was now, Jimmy thought. Kevin could squirm out of anything, escape from anywhere. Even when he was shoulder deep in shit, shit worse than this, he could still pull himself free.

Bristle Top laced his fingers as he strode down an aisle. Jimmy crouched behind the bright dresses. He looked towards the door. His mind screaming for Kevin, half expecting Kevin to come stamping through, and then suddenly he heard Kevin's voice booming into his head just as if it were coming over the P.A. at school. "He ain't gonna take you to the cops, you moron. He's gonna take you back to his office for a whipping."

Jimmy's tense body relaxed. He stood and walked forward, smiled at Bristle Top, raised his gloved hand in a wave.

Bristle Top's face registered surprise. "Mr. Robinson," he said anxiously.

"You looking for me?" Jimmy asked.

Bristle Top looked awkward and embarrassed. He looked like he didn't know what to say. His hand, a small mallet, fell across Jimmy's shoulder. It sat there for a long time, reflecting the pink of the dresses. Finally Bristle Top spoke. "Come with me, boy," he said.

Jimmy followed Bristle Top past the ladies housecoats and shirts to the back of the store. It was like he was trudging through snow, the
entire world slowing. His mind replaying the chair that sailed from his hands that morning, that flew into the air becoming a makeshift sled, that glistened in the winter sky before it barrelled down its inevitable slope to its final harsh finish.
Laurie LaFrambois was pregnant and Jimmy Robinson stole a car. It was parked outside the Toronto Dominion on Ouellette Street, two blocks from the shop where Jimmy’s mother was serving coffee. He didn’t really want the car. It was a Ford sedan, with rusting fenders. A cardboard air freshener hung from its mirror and fuzzy plaid covers encased its seats. He drove past the hospital, the library, the funeral home, wondering how far he’d get before the police pulled him over. He wondered if he might make it to Toronto. He’d never been there before, but the starter’s gun in his heart was telling him to go.

One of the guys he’d done time with at St. Jerome’s Wilderness Camp, Jack Goulet, teenage-sage, told him Toronto was a good place to get lost in. “The buildings are so tall and the population so copious,” said Jack “that as soon as your feet touch pavement, you vanish completely away.” Jack knew things and talked funny. He had a synthetic plate in his skull. He’d been the victim of a farm accident in Essex, then shot both his parents the following year. Jimmy wondered if he might meet up with Jack again. If he might melt into the very same Toronto pavement that Jack had headed for when he broke from St. Jerome’s.

Jimmy stopped for a red light at the intersection at Quebec Street. He lit a cigarette and watched a bunch of schoolgirls from Queen Anne’s in their ugly pleated skirts getting off a bus. Some had hiked their skirts
so high you could see the lace fringe on their bright little panties. The thought occurred he might lure one of these schoolgirls into his car, carry her off to Toronto, maybe take two, one for him, one for Jack, but then he remembered Laurie and the light turned green. “Green light Laurie,” he thought and began feeling queasy.

He turned left on Tecumseh, and drove out past the shopping mall. The car thumped over uneven tarmac and into a legion of diminutive potholes that flecked the road like a rash. He heard something clunk, something fall from the car, a hubcap or fender, a rusty exhaust pipe. He didn’t stop to find out what it was. He kept driving, past scraggy houses, past a boarded-up building that had once been a store, past telephone poles, past a motor inn. He could taste Toronto when he hit the deserted highway, feel his body fading away.

Sometimes when he was scared or lonely he’d still hear his brother Kevin’s voice. “Those Queen Anne girls were really hot,” the voice was saying now.

“I’m not going back. I’m going to Toronto,” Jimmy shouted. He covered his ears with his hands. The car swerved. Kevin’s voice stopped talking.

Laurie LaFrambois wasn’t hot. She was a scag. A pregnant thirteen-year-old scag. She was the only girl who didn’t fight when Jimmy pinned her to the ground in the park and hiked up her skirt. He put his hand down her ragged underpants, he put his hand in her shirt and pinched her breasts.
“I guess that makes you my boyfriend now,” she said when he’d finished with her and she heaved herself up from the mud and grass with dog shit on her back. “Aren’t we gonna kiss?”

Her lips were thin and white like scars. Jimmy had never been kissed before. She stuck her tongue into his mouth. He thought he might be sick.

“Don’t you know anything about making love?” she asked.

“Love?” Jimmy echoed.

“Oh, never mind,” she said.

Laurie’s brother had taught her to kiss, her stepfather had taught her how to “make love.”

“I stick my thing in your thing,” he’d said when she was ten. “We don’t tell your mother, O.K.?”

Laurie didn’t tell her mother, but she told the kids at school, she told her teacher. “You know what my stepfather does?”

The teacher had expected to hear something cute. He snores. He farts. He scratches his ass.

She didn’t expect to hear: “He sticks his thing in my thing.”

Now Laurie’s stepfather was in jail, the same place Jimmy was going to be if he didn’t disappear into the Toronto pavement.

“I didn’t do nothin’,” he heard himself saying. He saw himself standing in a courtroom. Saw Laurie with her big round stomach, her huge swollen breasts saying she wanted to be a good mother.

“I wanna raise my kid right.”
"You can't have a kid," he'd said when she told him.

They'd just had sex under an old Chrysler truck in the school parking lot and she impatiently rolled free from him. "Who says?"

"You ain't old enough to have a kid."

"If I'm old enough to get pregnant with a kid, I'm old enough to have one." She yanked up her underwear.

At first he thought she was bluffing, thought she was trying to get him to marry her or something crazy like that. There was no way he could imagine her having a kid. But then she started getting fatter, wearing her sister's maternity clothes, waddling instead of walking.

"My ma says she wouldn't let you marry me even if you wanted to. She says you raped me. She says you should a known better then messin' with a thirteen–year–old."

After that, she wouldn't let Jimmy touch her. Two policemen who cruised the projects had come looking for him this morning. He stood in the living room, peeking through a hole in the yellowed curtains. That's when he decided to leave.

The fields that flanked the highway were desolate. Churned up patches of mud and weed existed where rows of sturdy corn once grew. A cumbersome train rattled through the wasteland, running parallel to his car. Jimmy rode the gas pedal. He rolled down his window and shouted, "Woo–Woo!" The rev of the car growled "Torrrronnnnto." And the train called out "Home–free!"
For a moment Jimmy was soaring through space. He was flying into the vast grey clouds shaking the world away. "Torrronnto," the car purred, "Torrrrrrrrronnto," she sang. Jimmy laughed and punched the accelerator. It tore at a piece of green threadbare carpeting. It left a mark, a miniature horseshoe, embedded in the dusty vinyl mat. The car lurched then started to groan. It started to thump like a steel bucket pounding down a hill.

"Fuck," Jimmy said.

Smoke poured into his window, poured through the cracks in the hood. The steering wheel seized. The car veered to the shoulder pulling him down into a gully. Gravel and muck spewing like hail.

The absent world suddenly returned. It was suddenly spinning. Jimmy's head was smashing into the roof. When he woke, there were stars. The clear night sky shimmering above as if his broken head had released all its bright phantoms.

"You idiot," Kevin's voice bellowed into Jimmy's throbbing brain. "How could you be such a jerk?"

An eruption of stars burnt Jimmy's eyes. He tried to call for Kevin but his jaw was disconnected.

"You could a been porkin' them Queen Anne girls right now," Kevin was shouting. "You could a been in goddamned paradise." It hurt Jimmy to swallow. It hurt him to move his tongue, to moisten his lips. "Now you're all by yourself in this goddamned field with your guts fallin' out."
Jimmy fell asleep again. He dreamed he was at St. Jerome’s. Jack Goulet twisted a plucked bobwhite over a spit. The smell of roast chicken permeated a cathedral of trees. Saliva rolled off Jimmy’s chin, freezing in the dust. When the bobwhite vanished, there was frost on his naked hands, frost on his face. The icy ground beneath his back glued him to the spot and cracked when he tried to escape. He remembered the car flipping but could not recall how many years ago. He could not remember if he and Jack had made it to Toronto, if Kevin had ever come home.

The sun gradually rose behind a cloud of smoke. His hands gradually thawed. He reached into the fruitless earth and pulled from it the femur bone of some large dismembered animal. The bone was yellow and naked. A fine dirt vein ran over its curves. Jimmy remembered hunting with Jack in the woods at St. Jerome’s. He remembered killing a deer, gnawing the meat until its bones glistened.

He pulled himself up, gulped the morning air. The world swiveled and dipped. A mangle of ash and chrome and painted steel spun in his eyes. He couldn’t remember how he’d crawled free. The highway seemed so far off. He couldn’t remember where he was going or why and then he remembered Laurie and looked again at the mass of charred metal that once had been his car.

He headed away from the wreck, across the field, towards the railroad tracks. The police were probably searching for him already, and it wouldn’t be long before someone discovered the ravaged car.
Sweat clung to his head like small clear pearls and mud attached itself to his feet. He walked like a drunken man, unsure of a teetering sky, his numb body finally collapsing a mile away against the wall of an old wooden tool shed that some farmer had constructed in more prosperous times.

Hints of sky-blue paint still clung to the decaying wood and an expanse of barren land relaxed before his misty vision. Houses that trimmed the land settled as his eyes adjusted, and patches of witch grass and wild rye emerged like shafts of gold from the tufted earth.

He crawled into the shed and thought he was with Kevin. “That car wreck should a killed you,” Kevin said.

A smile tugged at his sore mouth. “Houdini Robinson,” he muttered, recalling how Kevin saw a movie all about Harry Houdini once. “Houdini was the greatest magician that ever lived!” Kevin said. He got so excited when he talked about Houdini that sometimes it seemed he was trying to pick a fight. “He broke out of a Siberian prison, and jumped off a bridge into the Detroit River with handcuffs on his wrists. He died over there.” Kevin said, nodding vaguely towards the border. “His appendix blew up and he died Halloween night.”

After that movie, Kevin never stopped trying to escape. He got Jimmy to tie his hands together with rope and shut him into an abandoned freezer chest. “If I’m not out in twelve hours, come and get me,” he’d say.
Jimmy would walk around the projects, pining for his company, worrying about the oxygen in that cramped tiny space. But Kevin always broke free. He always showed up, right before Jimmy was supposed to go get him.

"Ta da!" he’d say, and Jimmy would badger him to know how he did it.

"Houdini never told, and I’m not gonna either."

Robbie Carson was a friend of Kevin’s and he said he used to let Kevin out. He said he did it right after Jimmy put him in. "‘Twelve hours without my twerp brother,’” Kevin would say, and he and Robbie would laugh and smoke and drink tequila. But Jimmy knew Robbie Carson was full of shit. Kevin could get out of anywhere: locked closets, steamer trunks, the juvenile holding tank. He bent coat hangers and bobby pins and paperclips. There wasn’t a lock in the city he couldn’t pick. He broke in to buildings, just because he could. He was charming like Houdini too. Some people called him polite, said even in the worst families there’s always one good one.

Jimmy tried to remember how he’d escaped from the crush of his car. He tried to remember so he could tell Kevin, but all he recalled was tumbling through space, stars and bright planets, then the absence of light.

"They’ll think you’re dead," Kevin told him. “They’ll see the car, and think you burned to death. You’re so goddamned lucky. You must have a rabbit’s foot up your ass!”
Jimmy saw his mother weeping like she did when they told her Kevin was dead. He saw Laurie LaFrambois, her stomach like a huge shelf, her eyes like little red piss holes in the snow. “It’s your fault he’s dead,” Jimmy’s mother was saying to her.

“But I didn’t mean for him to die,” Laurie would sob. “I didn’t mean for him to go away.”

Jimmy fell asleep and dreamed he and Kevin were together again. They were jumping into the cattle car of a slow-moving train. When he woke, a train’s whistle was sounding. The sky flared with bright electricity and rain began to batter the roof of the shed. He twisted his throbbing body, pushed his aching head out through the door and let the cold rain fill his dry, wounded mouth.

His stomach contorted with hunger, and he slept fitfully. He thought about Jack Goulet and St. Jerome’s, thought about everything he’d learned there. He always carried a knife in his pocket. He ate insects while he waited until he was strong enough to hunt: longhorn beetle larvae that bored through the shed and left sawdust trails; lantern click bugs that glowed when they flew in the dark and squeaked when they crunched in his teeth.

In his fist, he clutched the femur bone he had found in the earth. It sang lullabies and when it spoke, it used Jack’s voice. “Protein,” it said, “an essential nutrient and a major constituent of the living cell.”
It didn’t make the bugs taste any better. It didn’t make them feel any better when they squirmed in Jimmy’s mouth. Still, he ate them, because he knew he had to.

He set traps in the field beyond the shed when he was stronger. The kind of traps they’d taught him how to make at St. Jerome’s. He dug holes with stones and fashioned a spade from a dangling board. Thick brown grasses that scored his fingers he used as thatching. At night chipmunks and field mice stumbled into the traps. He killed them with his knife, sliced off their pelts, cooked their pink bodies over an open flame.

“I doubt we’d find much better fare in New York,” the bone joked. It wriggled in his palm. It chuckled. He gazed at its dry ragged socket. It was beginning to grow Jack’s face. “Go away, Jack.” Jimmy said. “You ain’t suppose to be here. You were years ago.”

Jimmy dug deeper traps to accommodate larger game, rabbits and raccoons. Sometimes he worked an entire afternoon, hollowing out a site where he’d seen tracks, digging with his spade and sharp rocks, scooping dirt and clay. Sometimes he came across useful sticks, triangular rocks, arrowheads already formed. He carved a bow from a log. Stripped a piece from his jacket for the bowstring and fashioned arrows out of the bits and pieces the earth provided.

He ate pheasant then and wild turkey. He thought of Christmas and Thanksgiving when he and Kevin were small. Their gran had been alive then and used to fill their plates so high that they couldn’t see anything
in front of them but food. They ate until they thought they'd bust. "You don't feed these boys, Maureen," their gran would say, and their mother would smoke and pick at lumps of stuffing on her plate, "I feed 'em just fine."

"Why their little bodies are nothing but skin and bone," gran persisted, "and their faces! Stone white!" She pinched Jimmy's bloated cheek for emphasis; when he hollered, his mother cuffed him. "Don't you never talk with your mouth full."

"Leave the poor boy alone, Maureen," gran said. "If you hadn't run off with what's his name you'd probably have had boys who knew some manners."

Jimmy and Kevin had second and third helpings of everything at gran's. For dessert they each had half a pumpkin pie. Jimmy could imagine the pie. Its sweet, spicy softness. He could imagine gran, patting the top of his head. "That mother of yours," she whispered, "if she hadn't gotten herself knocked up, she wouldn't have had to run off and get married."

For the first time in days, Jimmy thought of Laurie Laframbois, her expanding chest and stomach, and began feeling sick. He wanted to take himself back to gran's place. He wanted to see him and Kevin stuffing their faces. He tried to get back there, but only got as far as gran's door, where his mother made him and Kevin wait, because something was stinking inside the apartment. His mother didn't say what she'd found. "Go home," was all she said, but Jimmy whined, "I wanna see gran." He
was thinking of pie and cookies, of the cake gran used to bake and keep in a painted metal tin. He pushed past his mother. Past a barricade of stench. He gagged and covered his face.

"When I say go home, I mean it!" his mother said, ripping the back of his jacket as she lifted and threw him into the corridor. He slammed into a wall. Everything turned bright violet, then black. The next thing he knew, he was at home in bed. His mother was standing over him, telling him gran had been sick and unhappy, that it was lucky she finally died.

Robbie Carson said the newspaper ran a story about gran that said she'd taken a bottle of sleeping pills, put a plastic Safeway bag over her head. It said she was so neglected that she decomposed for three weeks before anyone found her, but Robbie Carson was a liar and Jimmy never knew what really happened to gran. It was a cold afternoon. Earlier that morning, frost had painted the earth white, transformed dark mounds to charcoal, but the cool sun was unrelenting in its brightness and made pools of tears form in Jimmy's eyes. He slung his bow and arrows over his shoulder. Held the bone a little firmer in his grasp. He'd had enough thinking. He was going to go into the field and hunt.

"When the going gets tough, the tough start killing," the bone chuckled. "Wasn't that our once-time motto at old St. Jerome's?"

Jimmy didn't look at the bone. "Beat it," he said, loading his bow, as a kind of dizzy stillness fell across the field. "Heads up!" the bone said.

Above, the frigid sun began to tremble, and Jimmy witnessed as it sprouted a magnificent pair of wings. They were the largest wings Jimmy
had ever encountered. The brightest wings he knew he would ever see in his life. He lifted his bow, took aim into the air, and let the arrow fly. It rose toward the bright clouds, a shaft of naked wood before it twisted in flight, and sped back straight towards the earth, back towards Jimmy, blinded, by a flight he would never see again.
Resurrection

At the morgue, the coroner took fingerprints and identified the corpse as the presumed dead fugitive, Jimmy Robinson. His body was laid out on a cool steel gurney, samples of earth were collected from his nails and strands of hair.

Jimmy’s mother sobbed as police escorted her. “We already buried him,” she wailed hysterically, “Don’t you remember?” She clutched the blue sleeve on an officer’s arm. “You let me take a jar of his ashes from the car wreck! You said you was finished with the investigation, said you was satisfied he’d burnt.”

“I didn’t say anything, m’am,” the cop said. “I wasn’t even on that case.” He tried to jiggle his arm free.

“My Jimmy!” she shrieked. “My Jimmy!” A woman detective arrived then, and led her through a curtained door to a cubicle.

“We need you to identify your son’s body,” she said gravely.

The gurney was wheeled into the cubicle as Jimmy’s mother wept. “His eye,” she whispered, seeing a gauze patch. Forensic technicians had removed the curious stick believing it may have been a murder weapon, then packed the empty socket to absorb accumulating fluids.

“The body was injured,” the policewoman said stiffly.

“It’s my boy,” Jimmy’s mother sobbed, “It’s my Jimmy.”

“Why do you think your son would steal a car and run, Mrs. Robinson?” the meticulous policewoman asked.
“I don’t know,” Jimmy’s mother bleated.

“Did anyone want to kill your son, Mrs. Robinson?”

Jimmy’s mother dropped her sodden face into her hands. “Who’d wanna kill my boy? Who’d wanna kill my Jimmy?”

“We’re not sure, Mrs. Robinson,” the policewoman said, trying to exert the spirit of rational inquiry. “He may not have been murdered, but we’re not ruling it out.”

“You think I killed him?” Jimmy’s mother asked, “Is that what you think?” Her face looked as sad and withered as a dry apple.

“No, Mrs. Robinson, we just needed you to identify your son.”

Jimmy’s mother wiped her eyes, then blew her nose on a wad of tissue. “Jimmy had his problems, he got himself into trouble. I’m sure you got all of that written down someplace, but he wasn’t the kind of bad to get killed over.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Robinson,” the policewoman said, before leading her away.

Outside, Quebec Street seemed a blur of traffic; people moving too quickly on pavements, melting into cars, everything behaving as if it were connected, as if it skimmed the surface of some unseen mirage. Jimmy’s mother began thinking how Kevin and Jimmy both were dead now and how alone she was. She began thinking about how little money she earned and how hard her jobs were, how much she hated them and how tired she was. She wished she could have done better. She thought of her own dead mother, and the suicide note she’d written: “Since I ain’t got no
family and no one comes to see me no more, I may as well be dead”; and then Jimmy’s mother began sobbing again.

She did not go back to work at the diner that afternoon, nor did she go to the bar that night. She sat in the still, unlit living room of her geared-to-income unit, watching darkness spread over the walls and furniture as if it were a stain of coffee spreading through the fibres of her dress.

She smoked a cigarette, and then another. She took a shot of whiskey and then another. Darkness pasted its way through the blinds, along the banister that led to the upper floor, to Kevin and Jimmy’s bedroom, to the place, she decided, she would die, if she could muster the courage to end her life there.

She carried a bottle of whiskey to the small grey room her sons had shared that was so sorrowfully in need of paint. The old wooden bunk beds had collapsed, the mattress of the top caved in upon the bottom, a scratchy green army blanket bundled in a hollow at its center. There was a broken baseball bat in the corner of the room, a heap of gum and candy wrappers, hockey cards, a broken model airplane, a tangle of string. There was a pair of jeans, shirts, underwear and socks all squashed together, a mouldy bowl of Cheerios. Jimmy’s mother had not moved a thing before. She had left everything untouched. But now, she was compelled to lift the clothing, to fold it, to put it neatly away. Underneath, there were empty cigarette boxes and the small squares of gold and silver foil that Jimmy had removed from them and set alight to burn off
their paper backings. Even in darkness she could see streaks of ash and
burn holes in the thin brown carpet.

For a moment, she felt blood rising to her face and heard her own
raging voice screaming at Jimmy. “You little bastard!” and then she felt a
flood of tears filling her eyes. She opened the whiskey bottle and drank.
Her body shook. The whiskey moved like a fuse of yellow singeing her
tongue, as it blew down her aching throat into her empty heart. It stole
her breath. It made her recall how she laboured giving birth to her boys—
how the contractions had come so sudden with both, how water had
burst all over her legs and feet. It was just like her mother said it would
be. It was like being swallowed up into the bowels of hell. “Yeah, yeah,
ma,” she’d said when her mother told her. “You always exaggerate.” But
when it happened, she knew her mother had been right.

She took another swig of whiskey from the bottle. Again, she shook
and her breath deserted her. With both boys, she couldn’t breathe. She
couldn’t scream. It was like one of those nightmares where someone’s
attacking you and you try to call for help, but nothing comes out. If she
could have called for anything, she would have called for painkillers, an
epidural, gas, twilight sleep. “As soon as I feel anything, I want to be
knocked out, you understand?” she’d said to her doctor both times. She
didn’t realize that both times her doctor would be away in Florida playing
golf, that both times she’d be yo-yoing back and forth between the
hospital and the bowels of hell, waiting for a damned intern to play God.
With Jimmy, her breath evaporated. She pushed. Shit-head, the father, was there when she was having Jimmy, and he said she moaned like a cow. He stayed while she gasped, while the bowels of hell sucked her down and spit her back. “This is really embarrassing,” he told her, and she balled up her fist and smashed him as hard as she could in the general vicinity of his testicles. For her, that marked the beginning of the end. He thought both babies were ugly, hadn’t been there when Kevin was born, with Jimmy he’d asked the intern: “Can’t we just leave it here until he starts looking human?” The intern laughed but Shit-head was serious.

She took another swig of whiskey, and let the fleeting thought vanish that she’d find him and tell him what happened to the sons he’d abandoned.

She had some Valium in the bathroom medicine cabinet, prescribed for her after Kevin died. She knew a lot of women who took Valium. It made it hard for them to keep jobs. Now she thought she’d take the Valium and drink the whiskey until she passed out. She was only afraid she might not die, only afraid with her luck she’d end up being resuscitated and put on life support. She took another mouth full of whiskey and closed her eyes. “You’re not thinking straight, Maureen!” It was her mother talking, as clear as if she were standing right next to her and hollering in her ear. She opened her eyes then. She felt a tingle rise and fall along her spine. The phone rang and she left the room quickly to answer it.
It seemed like a long walk down the dark hallway to the stairs and from the stairs to the kitchen. Her mother’s voice remained, an echo in her ear. There was a story she’d heard when she was young, a story about a phone line that broke and fell into a graveyard allowing the dead to make contact with the living.

“Who is this?” she slurred when she picked up the phone, half expecting her mother.

“If you’d listened to me, Maureen, none of this would have happened. You wouldn’t be wanting to kill yourself and you wouldn’t be hearing voices.”

It wasn’t her mother on the phone though. It was a thin, childish voice, a quaking, uncertain voice. “Mrs. Robinson?” it squeaked, “I knew your son Jimmy. The police came by my house today and my ma said I got to phone you.”

“Who is this?” Jimmy’s mother repeated, feeling now, whoever it was it should be her mother. Another voice rose in the background, a gravely voice. “Tell her,” it shouted.

“I’m Laurie Laframbois,” the thin voice warbled. “You could kind of say I was Jimmy’s girlfriend.”

“If you’re sellin’ something, I don’t want to know,” Jimmy’s mother slurred, then lifted the bottle of whiskey to her mouth and kissed it with numb lips.

“I’m not selling anything,” the voice said.
"Give me the goddamned phone," the gravely voice demanded. "Is this Mrs. Robinson?"

"Who in hell's this?" Jimmy's mother said. The dark world around her pulsing and spinning as she grew more confused.

"I'm the mother of the girl your goddamned son knocked up, and I want to know what you plan to do about it?"

"Mother?" she asked.

"My daughter's a baby. She ain't no more than 13. Your boy should a known better."

Maureen felt her legs turn rubbery, she felt her stomach vault. "My boy's dead, and my mother's dead. Go away!" She slammed the phone at the metal receiver, but slapped the wall instead.

"You're making a fool of yourself, Maureen!" her mother's voice twanged in her ear.

She stumbled through darkness towards the kitchen sink. No way she could make it to the bathroom. In the sink, there were dishes—a pan, a plate. A sliver of moon reflected on a greasy pairing knife. She puked over it once and then she puked again.

"Now you've made yourself sick, Maureen!" It was her mother's loud disapproving voice.

Through tattered kitchen sheers moonlight filtered, the dark telephone handset swung like a clock pendulum from the wall. She wiped her mouth on her sleeve, groped to find the whiskey bottle she'd set down and grabbed the dripping knife.
“You never told me what was right!” Jimmy’s mother sobbed into the empty kitchen, “you only ever told me what was wrong!” She took a long swig.

“Maureen, pull yourself together. You’re acting crazy!” Her mother’s voice stiffened.

“You always said I was!” Maureen took another swig of whiskey, then waved the paring knife at her wrist.

“For goodness sakes, Maureen, it’s not sharp enough to cut butter. Put the knife down! You’ll only end up getting bloody jam over your wrists again.”

“I’ll make a clean cut like you always wanted, just tell me what’s right!” She waited, with the knife poised, whiskey backing up in her throat, listening for her mother’s answer. The whole world grew silent. “You can’t say, can you? You don’t want to, do you?”

There was the sound of footsteps on the concrete slab outside the front door. Jimmy’s mother stopped shouting. She held her breath and bit her lower lip. The dead bolt rattled and tumbled open, the doorknob twisted. Wind found its way to the kitchen, and the night.

“Who’s there?” Jimmy’s mother wanted to know. “Ma?” Legs dragged past the living room. She could hear the rhythm of their limping. “Ma?” she asked again. Her whole body shaking electric with dread.

The footsteps proceeded. Burdened, manacled, as if they dragged the weight of the world.
For a moment, the dark was so pervasive it felt as if light had not yet come to the earth, and then a ripple of moonbeams swam over linoleum, onto the white refrigerator, and reflected upon the frame of the rigid communicative figure.

"Who the fuck are you?" Jimmy’s mother called. "If you’re here to kill me, I’m not gonna stop you." Her hands shook so hard that the rest of the whiskey in the bottle fizzed.

Only a strong swampy smell of earth and clay, a smell of tadpoles and frogs came and grass that grows and dies and decays unseen.

“You’re making an ass of yourself, Maureen…carrying on like you’re the Halloween Queen.” Her mother whispered in her ear.

The moon infused the kitchen again. The figure stayed still saying nothing, covered in knots of mud, the flesh of its hands stained brown. Its hair glued into sharp dirty spikes. Its face appeared chiselled from stone. Over its right eye there was a patch of bloody gauze, just like Jimmy’s.

“You’re not Jimmy, are you?” Jimmy’s mother asked, “You can’t be my Jimmy.”

“That’s what I’ve been trying to tell you. Of course he is, Maureen, my little Jimmy," his gran’s voice announced.

The whiskey bottle dropped, fell onto the linoleum and rolled. Rivulets of yellow on the floor now like warm piss.

“They told me you was dead," Jimmy’s mother wept. “I saw you was dead with my own eyes!”
The figure stood, holding her with its tunnelling gaze.

"Jimmy! Tell me it’s you."

The expression on its face held nothing of her boy’s vacant youthfulness.

"I died and I been reborn."

"What?" Jimmy’s mother asked.

"From this day forward yous’ll know me as Tenskwatawa."

"Who?"

"The Prophet," it thundered. "Yous’ll know me as Tenskwatawa, the Prophet, cause the Great Spirit says so."

Jimmy’s mother reached down for the rolling bottle desperate for whatever whiskey remained. "My poor Jimmy," she sobbed, but he snatched the bottle from her hand. "No!" Jimmy, the prophet stated. "No more of this shit. The Great Spirit forbids it."

"Is that how you talk to your mother?" she reached for the bottle, "You come back here after playing dead, after giving me the fright of my life, after making me feel so bad about myself I wanted to die and you take my bottle away from me? Give me that, this second."

"No," the figure said, "You make food for Tenskwatawa. The Great Spirit says you gotta." With one movement it smashed the bottle hard against the refrigerator, whiskey spattered and a hail of glass chips swept over the floor.

"Why you little bastard!" Jimmy’s mother said.

"Silence!" commanded Jimmy-Tenskwatawa, the prophet.
Jimmy's mother tried to shout, tried to swear, tried to tell Jimmy if he didn't get off his John Henry high horse, she'd knock him off, but her voice would not come. She felt only frustration and fury as she always had with Jimmy.
The Complex

Once the writing student understands the concept of "archetype" and begins to grasp the ways the unconscious can be projected or can overwhelm consciousness, an introduction to the notion of the "complex" will further add to the comprehension of these psychological dynamics. James Hall (1986) offers a useful definition of a complex: "In Jungian theory [it] is a group of related images having a common emotional tone and formed about an archetypal core" (p. 30). Hall gives the example of images that may form around the mother archetype, such as one's personal mother, a grandmother, a female teacher. These, he says, can "shade" into figures from collective consciousness, such as certain actresses, perhaps the queen of England. All of these figures will have "a maternal meaning in relation to the ego" (p. 30); thus, we may speak of a mother complex. "Complexes are formed as experiences cluster about archetypal determinants. It is as if the archetypes form a magnetic field that differentially attracts and orders experiences" (p. 30). In spite of popular misconceptions, complexes are not in themselves negative and are not things to rid oneself of; rather, "they are normal building blocks of the mind...[which] determine to a great degree how we experience ourselves and others" (p. 32). Jung considered the ego itself a complex, but different from other complexes in that consciousness is attached to it. Jung saw the "Self" as both the centre of the psyche and as the archetypal core of the ego complex. "Every complex consists primarily of a 'nuclear element,' a vehicle of meaning, which is beyond the realm of the conscious will, unconscious and uncontrollable; and secondarily, of a number of associations connected with the nuclear element, stemming in part from innate personal disposition and in part from individual experiences conditioned by the environment" (Jacobi, 1971, p. 9). The complex, once activated, can break away from ego consciousness, acting like an "animated foreign body in the sphere of consciousness" (p. 9). As Hall elucidates:

Each complex has the potential of organizing an entire personality of greater or lesser complexity, analogous to the way in which each cell of the body contains the genetic information in potentia for the creation of an entire human organism. Of course, the complex is constrained to function as a part of the total organism, just as human body cells in the healthy state behave as orderly parts of a body. A cell unregulated to serve the good of the body as a whole becomes cancerous; a complex unrelated to the organization of the psyche (including both conscious
and the unconscious) can lead to neurosis or (in the worst case) psychosis” (p. 34)

As one grows older, complexes can change, “particularly in cases of pathological complexes, compensating forces in the psyche work towards transformation” (p. 34). The complex possesses an individual by overwhelming ego consciousness. In the hold of a complex, an individual finds his or her stable personality can vanish and it is as if one has assumed another personality. As Hall points out, “If one can imagine that the complex has a rudimentary consciousness of its own, it is then possible to imagine that it has its own particular purpose. The complex may, in fact, form its viewpoint, feel that it knows what is best for the psyche as a whole” (p. 34).

For the student writer, an understanding of psychological complexes as theorized by Jung can assist both in plot and character development in fiction as well as in literary non-fiction. By recognizing disparity in fluid conceptualizing, the writer is better able to take an explorative approach to subject matter. The writer can become less concerned with creating continuity and more involved in examining the fragmented as experienced by herself or her characters.

In the following story that I wrote (2000), “Passion in Remission,” I attempted to work with my conceptualization of “complexes.” It is written from the point of view of a fourteen-year-old girl who is witnessing her father, an alcoholic, dying of cancer. As Hall (1986) writes:

Anyone who has had to deal with a loved family member who has an alcohol problem will think of ready examples [of the loved one’s complex overpowering ego consciousness]. The usual personality virtually disappears with the ingestion of alcohol and is replaced by a relatively stable shadow personality that can be belligerent or fun loving, or in some notable way different from the sober ego state. When the shadow personality is in ascendance, it “knows” things with certainty and adopts attitudes that may be at wide variance with the usual sober personality. (p. 34)

In the case of this story, I am attempting to show both the narrator’s father complex, as well as the “relatively stable shadow personality” that arises from what we might label the father’s “power complex” when he is drinking.

The narrator is strongly connected to her dysfunctional father. She has come to see her father’s stable alcoholic shadow personality, which she calls “theatrical,” as his ego personality, and, in fact, can not reconcile herself to his true weak and ineffectual ego
personality, which he exhibits in his illness. In the opening, the narrator identifies the image of her father’s powerlessness with his being carried from the house on a chair. She anticipates this powerlessness initially as an act carried out by the stable shadow personality, which she believes to be the true personality of her father. The shadow personality, which arises from the complex that possesses him, is manipulative, powerful, destructive, and inflated. It is this personality that the narrator recalls with memories of her father hurling chairs in the air, and creating scenes in department stores. The behaviour he exhibits when in his complex is socially shocking, yet gets immediate results. In his illness, when he is not drinking, his normal ego personality appears to the narrator as “pathetic.” This sets up a conflict in the narrator. This conflict resolves with her father’s shadow personality possessing her at the story’s end: she expresses the rage and passion which she has witnessed in her father. As Jacobi (1971) elucidates, “if the complex has to a greater or lesser degree become ruler in the house of the conscious ego, then we may speak of a partial or total identification between the ego and the complex. This phenomenon can be clearly observed in … women having a father complex. Unbeknownst to them, the words, opinions, desires, and strivings of … the father have taken possession of their ego, making it their instrument and mouthpiece” (p. 16).
Passion in Remission

They carried him out of the house on one of our kitchen chairs. He was that skinny and weak, he couldn't walk, but I thought he was just being theatrical. They were taking him to court. Our dog got out of the yard, pissed all over the neighbour's shrubs, and killed them.

I held the door and watched him hunch on the chair. He was hanging onto the seat with both hands. His knuckles were almond-coloured with effort.

The seat and back of the chair used to be red vinyl and smelled of new dolls. Then mum read in one of her magazines about making old furniture new again, and re-upholstered the whole set with scratchy brown fabric she picked up at K-mart on the clearance table along with a bunch of big golden tacks.

Could have been the very chair he'd hurled in the air the night the astronauts landed on the moon. I looked carefully to see if the back was crooked or if there were any tacks missing.

If it was the chair, mum sure had done a good job of putting it back together again. No one ever would have known. She re-upholstered two living room chairs too and started the ruffle of the couch. Then, she ran out of steam for re-upholstering and started antiquing everything. Black and red, gold and white, black and green, black and blue. For months, I
stuck to everything I touched, and that singeing smell of paint made my head ache.

I didn't think he had a chance in hell of winning. I watched him down the concrete porch steps. His face was like an imploded prune. Well, maybe they'd feel sorry for him.

None of us were going to court with him. It was something he wanted to do alone, though I found out later we were probably the only ones in the whole neighbourhood who didn't attend. Mrs. Bazos, the Hungarian woman at the end of our street who talked like Zsa Zsa Gabor, said she told the judge, "Why don't you leave this poor man alone, can't you see he's sick?"

I imagined him on the witness stand. I imagined him stamping his foot and pounding his fist. I imagined him saying, "So what if it was a white dog, three foot high on all fours, so what....Maybe it was someone else's dog. How can you be so certain it was my dog?"

He could work himself up into a passion when he wanted to. He could make his voice go high and desperate. There was that time when he was jumping up and down in this department store after my brother had been caught shoplifting. "Let me see my son! Take me to my son!" People crowded around. The security woman, who was supposed to keep him out front while they pried a confession loose from my brother in the back room, buckled. She was no match at all for him.

"How do you know my son did it?" He was indignant. He howled. Everyone could hear him. Everyone was so quiet. It was like live theatre. It
was that wrenching, grieving, horrific note only he could manufacture. He walked out with my brother and drove away. But I thought, no, he could only be pathetic now.

"She took us to court because she's jealous," my mother clucked. She was into ceramics now and had a streak of glaze on her cheek.

We all thought our neighbours coveted our dog. Penny, the neighbour who lost her shrubs, owned a yappy little nothing of a puppy.

We also thought they coveted our pool. Even if it was green most of the time and we couldn't swim in it. We knew he lost that night. He never said anything, but we knew because he didn't tell us he won, and if he had won, he would have wanted to tell us blow by blow how it happened. If he hadn't been so sick, I know he would have been drinking. He would have drunk himself into a snit and maybe thrown another kitchen chair or broken something my mother was making.

He was pretty nasty anyway and had been even before he found out he had cancer and they did the operation. But now he was just lying on the orange couch with the unfinished yellow ruffle, his head tilted back on a cushion, his mouth open like he was having trouble breathing. A fine white powder that looked like dried milk around his lips. His eyes kind of rolling back in his head. I sat looking at him, wondering if he practised that in front of the mirror. It was very convincing. It could tear your heart right out of your chest if you didn't know him. Still, it hadn't done him any good in court.
In the morning, I heard him talking to my grandmother. She was coming almost every day now, and my mother was getting used to scuttling off to the basement to avoid her.

"Ma, promise me you'll look after the kids," he whined. "Promise me you'll see them through school."

I waited, hearing my heart tick, and the creak of my bed. It was like listening for a car to jump start, or a furnace to kick in, or a Christmas cracker to explode. "Come on," I thought, tightening my fists, "come on."

When he'd first wanted to move here and didn't have the money, he'd lit into her then. "We're flesh and blood," he'd said, "These are the only grandchildren you'll ever have. Loan me the money for a house. If pa were alive, he'd give me the money." His eyes flashed with success. His voice rose and crashed and threw her clear off her objections. She handed him a crumpled cheque. One she dug out way at the bottom of her purse. Her hand trembled when she signed it. Her face and lips were so flat and tight you could have served drinks on them. We moved in two weeks later. He was that sure of himself he'd already made a bid and started packing.

Now, there was only silence. She hadn't even responded. She just walked out. Well, Jesus Christ, I thought as the screen door slammed and my father panted. My mother scaled the creaking basement stairs as my grandmother's car pulled away.

"Can I make you a nice piece of sirloin steak?" She asked him in a fake, sing-song voice. "How about a chicken sandwich? Spaghetti?
Minestrone soup? I can warm up the minestrone soup, no trouble. Beans on toast? Pickles? How about pizza? I can order a pizza."

I was still in my room but imagined him lying out there above the yellow ruffle, moving his shrivelled head slowly to and fro, as if to give it a good decisive shake might damage it. And those vertical pain lines in his face so deep you could hide things in them. I clenched my teeth. Jesus Christ, I thought. Jesus Christ.

"Ice cream," she continued, "a sundae, cashews, fruit, or how about Chinese food? You've always been partial to it. I could phone now, and they'd bring it in a jiff."

"Jesus Christ." It emerged from my mouth this time like torn flesh. "Jesus bloody Christ!" I stood on my bed. My voice sliced the walls, stuck my mother in the throat and continued out past the front door. My hands, fists, rising over my head. Rising to the ceiling.
In my story (2000) “Flying Horses,” the father is possessed by a complex. Here, the father is a Vietnam veteran whose traumatic war experience has resulted in an overpowering complex that has cast him into a psychosis. As Hall (1986) explains, “one of the most striking examples of the sudden formation of a complex, and its persistence over time, is the result of traumatic neurosis. Traumatic neurosis is caused by a person being helplessly caught in an overwhelming situation. A person pinned under a collapsed building, for example, or a soldier in combat unable to move because of enemy fire, may have a sense of complete helplessness and hopelessness” (p. 31). The complex can overpower the ego personality. When it does so completely, “the unmistakable characteristics of a disastrous inflation will be manifested, as may occur, for example, in individuals who identify themselves with God or the devil, with a child or a goblin, with political or historical figures, or all manner of animals, and in the various forms of psychosis involving partial or total loss of ego” (Jacobi, 1971, p. 16).

The father in the story projects the content of his unconscious complex into the external world. He imagines the terrorist enemy existing everywhere but within his own soul. “If the unconscious complex is so markedly ‘split off’ as to take on the character of an entity (often of a menacing nature) assailing the individual from outside, or if it appears as an attribute of an object of outward reality, such symptoms occur as may be observed in persecution mania, paranoia, etc” (p. 16). The father’s complex, which has resulted in his paranoid psychosis, is so powerful that it not only has subsumed his ego, but also has made his family its prisoners.
Flying Horses

I hear the toilet flush and know it's midnight, his feet march over bathroom tiles. In fifteen minutes, the splintering porch door will open, then shut. He'll head for the living room, stand at a window, peek out through dented blinds, stiff as an ancient ghost.

I hold my breath listening, wondering, though I know what should happen next. I should hear mom, her pink, fluffy slippers like powder puffs dusting the hall.

"Come back to bed." That's what she tells him. Her voice is always gentle. I'm resting on my elbows, the muscles in my body tighter than a stretched cable. I think of my sister across the hall, wonder if she's sleeping. I send her telepathic messages.

"How's it going?" I ask her, "You awake?" I try to sound calm, friendly.

I imagine her in the darkness, small as a bug in the centre of her bed, thinking back to me, "I'm OK," or dreaming of magic castles and flying horses that take her right outside the house and up into the air.

When she was younger, you couldn't shut her up about flying horses. She saw them everywhere. In the clouds, on streets, in stores. Mostly they hid in our basement or under our parents' bed. They thought someone was going to shoot them. They waited till everyone was sleeping, then nudged themselves free, clip-clopped down the hallway, stood outside her bedroom. She wanted to go with them, but was afraid
they might not bring her back, afraid she might slip from their silvery magic, fall just before she reached the moon. She'd cry about it in the mornings. Then she'd piss herself. "If I don't go with them, they'll leave and never come back," she'd howl. Mom tried to comfort her. She tried to pretend it was the most natural thing in the world.

"Lots of kids have imaginary friends," she told my sister's teacher. The teacher showed her all the pictures my sister drew. Horses and people. Our entire family, hacked apart. Mom brought the pictures home, then she took us out of school, moved us all the way out here to the country, said her kids didn't need a shrink, and that she could teach us better anyway.

The flying horses left. They blinked their big, bashful eyes, waved their hooves and flew. "They were scared," my sister whispered, "they couldn't live with us anymore." That was the last she said about them.

Mom taught us at the kitchen table every night after work, and he didn't mind so much as long as we were quiet. She picked up old math texts and readers and made us learn. Neither of us cared for school, and it was fun in the day to bike all the way into town, look in the stores, drop by the restaurant for free pop and watch mom work. Then her boss said we couldn't hang around, so we rode our bikes in the opposite direction, way, way out past the fields. We climbed trees, sometimes picked apples and berries and Indian corn, made cigarettes from dried leaves.

We tried to stay out in the fields as long as we could, watching the pink sun fall behind trees, talking about what we'd do when we were old
enough to decide. We didn't want to go home and bother him, but then he said it was dangerous in the fields: "Hell, could be land mines out there." My sister wet herself, mom made us stay inside. That was two months ago.

I've learned how to get out of my bed without making a sound, tiptoe invisibly through the house. I know what to do, how to cover my face with a wet cloth, hold my breath without panicking. I know how to hide, I know how to crawl on my belly like a snake, how not to get hit by a shell, how to take the things I need. I know what it means to survive. I know there are things you never say, things you never do, and then there are things you always do, even when they seem unimportant; even when you're too tired, you do them anyway.

I've learned how to put my ear against doors without touching them, how to sniff out the different members of my family five hundred yards away. French fries and cigarette smoke is mom, even after a shower. Molly always smells of piss. But his smell clings everywhere, even to Mom and Molly sometimes. It holds like heavy tar, seeps in through the cracks, wherever he stands, wherever he moves.

He guards the windows, monitors the doors, every half-hour he makes the rounds. There are vents big enough to house bombs, locks weak enough to smash with one strong hammering. He's installing extra deadbolts, extra chains, pulling wire as thin as guitar string around and through every piece of furniture, every ornament, every handle, every latch. Sometimes the explosions rattle the house. Sometimes the flashes
burn into you, the sounds deaden you; it can take hours before you
realise it's over, that you got through it, and then without warning it can
start all over again.

He knows about guerrilla war tactics, he's read The Art of War,
done time in the jungle, danced on the skulls of weaker or braver men.
He used to tell stories all the time. He used to wave his fist in the air,
bring it down hard, break things with it. Mom told us just ignore it, just
nod, so we did, then he'd tell us more.

It got so we were dreaming about it every night. About machine
gun holes like red pinpricks in the chest that take your entire back off,
splatter your yellow guts on the ceiling; about arms and legs and hands
that go missing after a flash of hot light; and fountains of blood that
shoot into the air across a room.

"You're lucky," he told us, "God-damned lucky that I made it
through, that I'm here now, that I can protect you."

When the noise comes, he shifts toward the Venetian blinds, stands
well to the side, dips an aluminum slat with his baby finger, then pivots,
kicking the front door wide, and starts firing.

Molly and I drop under the kitchen table, we hold each other like
babies while he's yelling at us to take cover in our rooms. I try to pull
Molly, make her crawl upstairs with me, but her eyes are like stone and I
know she isn't hearing. "Please, just don't piss yourself," I beg her,
knowing that this is ridiculous, it shouldn't matter.
Clouds of choking smoke and a hail of sharp debris twist over us. I yank Molly by the arm and she screams.

"Get the hell out of here, now!" he shouts above the deafening blasts, and I pull Molly up the stairs, even though she resists, even though her arm cracks and she's crying and shouting for me to stop.

After the skirmish, he lectures us: "If I tell you to move, you move. If I tell you stay, you stay. If I tell you to shit, you shit. Do you understand? You don't ask questions. You just follow orders."

Molly shivers in her wet pants, cradles her injured arm. We both stand attentively, nod our heads emphatically. He disappears to make his next round.

Mom gives Molly a bath, puts a sling around her arm, makes supper. We sit at the table, ignoring the wires that run between and around us.

"You should have seen the bastards run," he's telling her, beer foam collecting in the corners of his mouth. "I set some more traps this afternoon. So much for the enemy. Those bastards won't get in...at least not in one piece!"

He tells us all he's got a new plan. He hands out a different map. Everywhere an X appears, he's buried explosives. There are some now in the flower beds, in the window boxes, all around my sister's playhouse outside, a whole new system strategically located in the basement.

"When the war's over," mom whispers to Molly, "you'll be able to play outside again."
I notice mom across the table, giving me the kind of hard look she
gives when she wants me to shut up.

"I didn't say anything," I tell her, and she turns away from me like
she doesn't hear.

"When will the war be over?" Molly asks. She's sobbing, clinging to
the sleeve of mom's dress, pulling at it like her fingers can't let go.
"Please make it stop!" Her eyes are scared wild. She looks like someone
who can't breathe. Like someone who's slowly bleeding to death.

Mom tries to loosen her fingers. She looks into her eyes, speaks
very slowly. "When the war ends you can go back to school. I'll buy you
pretty dresses. You can ride your bike out into the field and not be afraid
anymore."

He throws some kind of hand-grenade. A huge white streak sucks
the air dry, an explosion louder than any I've ever heard shakes the house
and makes it sound as if it's cracking into tiny pieces. Stone, dirt and
gravel shower the roof like broken stars.

"Take cover," he yells, smashing a board off the living room window
with his rifle, but all of us are already under something solid and lying
flush to the ground.

I smell Molly's pee and think I'm going to be sick. "Get to your
rooms! You know the drill!" He's shouting. The shrubs at the front of the
house are flaming like bonfires. "Move it!" he orders.

Mom strokes Molly's hair, lifts her to her feet. A second explosion
turns the world orange, everything suddenly goes dull.
"When the war's over," I hear my mother murmur to Molly as she rocks her back and forth, "When it's over. When it's over."

It's a broken record, a nightmare, my ears are thumping like jack hammers and I don't know if I'm really hearing it or not. "Shut the fuck up!" I tell her. "Get to your rooms!" I hunt around with my hands in the chalky clouds of plaster for a rifle.

Smoke and dust roll like a warm wave through the house. Broken plaster, splinters of wood, shattered glass, sprinkle us from the air.

"Make the war stop!" Molly shouts. She's looking at me now, asking me to end it. If I could find a God-damned rifle, maybe I could do something, or at least try.

"Get to your room, Molly," I order. She stands there, waiting. She stands there, while the whole fucking world burns, while bullets rip into walls and smoke as thick as meat pours into our lungs.

Mom tries to move her. "Help me," she chokes, struggling to lift Molly into her arms. The smell of piss is overwhelming.

"I can't," I say.

"Do what I tell you!" my mother shouts, and I come close to helping, but when I touch Molly's wet pants, I start gagging and give up.

I surrender deliberately, loudly, so Molly can hear me above the din of gunfire and the crash of breaking earth outside. "There is no war." Mom furrows her brows, shoots poison from her eyes at me.

Molly's eyes are wider than moons. Mom goes to cover Molly's ears.
"You wanted me to help," I say, but suddenly she's strong enough to get Molly up the stairs on her own, strong enough to turn her back on me.

"Fuckin' cowards," he's shouting through broken boards, "Come out and fight, you yellow bastards!"

I stand watching mom go, Molly coughing and crying, smoke rolling over us like black film.
In “Flying Horses,” the father’s complex acts autonomously, assuming a terrorist identity that overwhelms the father and the family and persists over time. In “Passion in Remission,” the complexes show themselves in partial shadow personalities that are less extreme, and would not be considered to manifest the symptoms of full-blown psychosis. To this extent, the reader of “Passion in Remission” is less likely to consider the father as completely insane, while in “Flying Horses,” when the reader discovers there really is no external war taking place, the father’s insanity is the only logical conclusion. For the student writer, considering a character’s complexes and the degree of their relatedness to the character’s psyche can give organic shape to plot as well as authenticity to character.

**Anima and Animus**

Through his clinical practice and his own self-exploration, Jung hypothesized that every man has an inner female aspect (which he termed the “anima”) and that every woman has an inner masculine aspect (or “animus”). Both, according to Jung (1959), are archetypes of the collective unconscious. They can express both personal and collective components that contain opposite functions, traits and characteristics to one’s conscious personality as well as carry a particular collective character.\(^{10}\) When undeveloped, these characters, according to Jung, behave with the worst collective and cultural traits of each sex. The animus and anima can both possess and be projected as well as be integrated into consciousness. Much of the focus of Jungian writing has been on the negative impact of the undeveloped animus and anima, which Jung found caused women, for example, to be opinionated and men to be moody. When these aspects are developed, however, Jung saw them as acting as a bridge for feeling in men and intellect in women. He saw them as figures who would play “a vital role in analysis in connecting the person as he or she is (ego) with what he or she may become (self)” (Samuels, 1985, p. 212).

Jung (1982) found that while most people can relate to and understand the concept of shadow, the concept of “anima” and “animus” is more difficult to grasp. Of the anima, he wrote: “[people] accept her easily enough when she appears in novels or as a film star, but she is not understood at all when it comes to seeing the role she plays in their own lives, because she sums up everything that a man can never get the better of and never finishes coping with” (p. 94). According to Marie Louise von Franz (1999), “The anima embodies all feminine psychic qualities in a man—moods, feelings,
intuitions, receptivity to the irrational, his personal capacity for love, his sense of nature and most important of all, his relationship to the unconscious” (p. 311). If a man has experienced his mother in a negative way, and as a result the anima “bears the stamp of his mother’s character” then “his anima often takes the form of depressive moods, irritability, perpetual malcontent, and excessive sensitivity” (p. 311). The animus, according to Jung (1953), “is the deposit...of all woman’s ancestral experience of man” (p. 209). The animus can express himself as “sacred convictions” (von Franz, 1999, p. 319). He can be “something in her that is cold, stubborn, and completely inaccessible” (p. 319). When developed, however, the animus is expressed positively as “initiative, courage, objectivity and intellectual clarity” (p. 323).

The concept of anima and animus has been the focus of much extension and revision as well as much critical discussion among Post-Jungians (commentators who take Jung’s ideas as essentially a starting point and expand or develop his theories). It is particularly the assigning of a biological gender to collective psychological characteristics, and the binary approach that have tended to dominate Post-Jungian debate regarding the feminine. “Jung’s descriptions of gender fall, over neatly, into two mutually defining and mutually exclusive modes: the anima collapses into woman, feeling, Eros, relating, the feminine, while the animus stresses thinking, Logos, spirit, creating and, hence, the masculine” (Rowland, 2002, p. 54). As Andrew Samuels (1985) writes: “Jung’s approach to gender and sex was affected by both his personal situation and the context in which he lived, and also by his whole cast of thought, his conceptual bias” (p. 215). June Singer (1976) suggests that “the behavioural models of the past are not viable models for where the boundaries of the soul are today. Man is no longer as unconscious of his anima as he used to be, or woman of her animus” (p. 28). If these reservations are taken into account, however, the notion of the anima and animus, when considered as the contrasexual embodiment of “something other, strange, perhaps mysterious, but certainly full of possibilities and potentials [of each sex]” (Samuels, 1985, p. 212) is a useful concept for the student writer to reflect upon. It is also useful for student writers to grapple with ideas of psychic and physical nature and their literary and metaphoric embodiment in a character’s sexuality.

One might consider, for example, the contrasexual characters in their own work. Do these characters, in some way express the unconscious contents of the author? Do they express something of the collective unconscious? What is the interplay between

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masculine and feminine characters in a particular work? How does one serve as a bridge for the other's consciousness and psychological development? Further, one might consider the way particular cultural biases of gender may impact the contrasexual components of characters. Any and all of these questions further the student writer's understanding of the characters she finds inhabiting her writing as well as add to her self-understanding, which promotes psychological growth and maturation.

As mentioned previously, the anima and animus can both possess us and be projected onto others. Anne McNeely writes, "it is all but impossible not to project the contrasexual archetype. It is a natural response in relationships" (McNeely, 1991, p. 13). Romantic love, for example, is thought to occur when the anima and animus become projected. Similarly, strong feelings of any kind, positive and negative, attach to the outer world carriers of these internal figures. Besides this conception being theoretically useful for student writers in the unearthing of character motivations, it can also assist them in establishing more productive relationships with their own writing practices. As McNeely points out, because these contrasexual figures can play such a large part in creative processes, often problems one experiences in writing can come about through animus or anima issues. She has personally found that her experience of writer's block arises through possession by the negative animus. "Even when writing supports the positive animus, the discouragement appears to be sparked by the negative animus. It takes such forms as: 'That has already been said,' 'It is not worth the trouble,' and a number of corollaries, such as, 'It won't be read,' or 'It will meet with nothing but criticism,' and the most deadly of all: 'It's impossible to put all that into any meaningful form' (p. 15). The anima can be equally thwarting in the writing process. According to Marie Louise von Franz (1999), the negative anima "will endlessly whisper within a man: 'I'm nothing,' 'It doesn't make sense anyhow,' 'It's different for other people,' 'Nothing gives me any pleasure,' and so on....[S]he constellates a general sense of gloom. Troubled moods like these can intensify to the point of temptations to suicide; thus the anima can become a demoness of death" (p. 311). Both negative anima and animus can possess student writers, whispering evil in their ears, denouncing their efforts as inferior and futile, and making the task of writing painful if not completely impossible.

Acknowledging the inner voice of the negative manifestation—and discerning, through investigation, that this negative voice is not one and the same as the ego's, can assist a great deal in a student writer overcoming common obstacles to writing. Indeed,
the concept of “the inner critic” as discussed by Natalie Goldberg and others, is an attempt to demonstrate the discrepancy between two conflicting polarities in the writer. As one aspect moves to create, the other moves to destroy. The ego, until it begins to pay attention, believes itself to be the voice of both. By paying attention to one’s animus and anima and its responses to one’s creative efforts, one can eventually evolve the more “negative critic” into “the helpful editor.” Also, negative anima and animus can be projected onto others.

I recall several years ago when I was teaching a part-time and continuing education course in Creative Writing at Camosun College, one of my students kept insisting that her husband kept her from her writing assignments. “He thinks I’m wasting my time. He asks me why I think anyone would ever want to read anything I should write,...and I guess he’s right.” It was only after this student came to identify the animus as an inner aspect and began dialoguing with him in her writing that her husband’s critical judgements about her work, to her considerable surprise, stopped. Whether they really did stop, or if she just stopped hearing them, I cannot say—but eventually, she was able to complete her assignments and by the end of the term, took a completely different view towards her writing. Her new view had to do with her own pleasure and excitement of discovering the mystery she engaged in when she wrote. This new perspective should not be confused with the reductive cliché of “writing for one’s self” because it was much more than simply this. This new view, which evolves through the evolution of the anima and animus, is one that moves so far from the realms of ego and audience, that the two virtually no longer hold any power in the writing process. The element that emerges as strong and engaging becomes the discovery and recovery of story.

The Creative Writing teacher as well as fellow classmates may also become the carriers for a student’s negative and positive projections. Students who are the same sex as their teachers and classmates may project shadow qualities onto them, while opposite sex students may find in their instructor and classmates a convenient hook on which to hang their animus or anima projections. In the Creative Writing workshop such a state of affairs can cause all kinds of interesting and distorted situations, which, in many instances, may prevent the constructive functioning of the class. Having some idea of these archetypal components can assist student writers, as well as instructors, in all aspects of teaching and learning.
In the following story that I authored, “Wedding Feast,” I attempted to work with the concept of the negative animus. I began thinking about the negative animus in the context of eating disorders after reading Marion Woodman’s (1982) *Addiction to Perfection: The Still Unravished Bride*. In “Wedding Feast” it was my hope to explore how a mother’s negative animus might poison her daughter’s animus, and how this might play itself out in the extreme. Again, as in all fictional stories that I write, my desire to understand a psychological situation arises from a personal, and quite often, autobiographical concern, though rarely are the fictional stories I write in any way connected to my outer life experiences. In reading Woodman, I began to consider the relationship my own mother had with food and how this relationship had affected me, particularly while I lived at home. Though I never experienced an eating disorder, I do believe that food became the focus of an unacknowledged power struggle between us. Battles for my independence and selfhood were often fought in our familial kitchen over food. In exploring these issues, Woodman’s (1980) work proved invaluable. She presents case studies in *The Owl Was a Baker’s Daughter* that set the stage for my story. She describes one of her analysands with an eating disorder this way: “Her negative animus cocoons her from the world. Although part of her naturally longs for a lover, the other part, who knows the annihilating power of her negative animus only too well, fears masculine aggression. Because her relationship to the masculine was through her mother’s animus with all its ambitions and illusions, she has no strong masculine voice to bring order to her life, to say NO to binging; instead, her masculine voice is insatiable in its demands” (p. 75).

Jody, the story’s main character, has fought against, but finally ingested, her mother’s negative animus—to devastating effect. Animus issues of power lurk behind the mother’s maternal mask as she seizes control of Jody’s life, but the negative animus, now inside the daughter, rather than succumbing to the mother’s domination, possesses Jody as an insatiable demon of her own. I did not know exactly what this insatiable animus demon of Jody’s would do. I allowed the psychological dynamics between mother and daughter to unravel to the edges, and beyond, the known world of animus power struggles. I was both surprised and shocked by the ultimate outcome. On a much later reading of the story, I also became aware of a pun that the unconscious supplied. Jody’s husband-to-be’s name is “Phillip” which can be phonetically read as “fill up.”
Wedding Feast

I'd been living on my own since I was 16, but mom rigged a cot up in her spare bedroom now. "It's not every day a daughter gets married," she said, smiling over the orchids she got wholesale from her florist friend.

I dropped my suitcase on the floor at the foot of her stairs. It clattered. "Do you have anything to eat?" I asked.

She lumbered over to the refrigerator to tuck the orchids safely inside.

"In less then twenty-three hours, Jody, you'll be Mrs. Ellis, isn't that exciting? You must be excited."

"Right! Excited!" I said. "You got some cold cuts, maybe?"

When I lived at home, we used to fight about food a lot. She'd buy a box of cookies and hide it under her bed. I'd ask, "You got any cookies?" And she'd say "no," so I'd go to her room, lock the door and scoff the whole lot. All the while she'd be screaming, "Don't look under my bed." I always ended up puking though.

"You sure you want to eat?" she said now. "When I got married, I was as sick as a rat. I couldn't have eaten a thing."

"Yeah, but you were pregnant when you got married," I wanted to say, but held my tongue.

"I'm hungry," I said instead.
She opened the refrigerator door wide, like she was greeting guests. "Go ahead, take what you want, just make sure you leave me something for dinner."

I looked into her fridge. She was so neat with food. Everything in clear plastic containers. I spotted the bean salad and leftover spaghetti first.

"Sometimes I think you just come over here to eat me out of house and home," she said, but I ignored her and found a small pan. My stomach churned and I drooled, waiting for the spaghetti to warm.

"The dress arrived, you'll be relieved to know," she said, fussing with some lacy white circles, napkin rings maybe.

"I hung your dress in my closet. The closet in the spare room is so pokey."

I pushed great forkfuls of spaghetti down my throat. I couldn't taste it. My lips and hands and chin—in fact, the entire front of me was quivering and covered in sauce.

"Of course you'll try it on. I really must see you in it now. I can't wait until tomorrow. I don't want Philip to see it, though. It's bad luck, you know. And by the way, I don't hold with you giving him his ring before the ceremony. I'm sure that's a terribly unlucky thing to do."

I slurped up the last pieces of spaghetti in the pan and started on the salad. I watched her eyes avoid me while she spoke. She was pretending not to notice.
I used a ladle to scoop the beans out of the plastic container and into my mouth, a dozen at a time.

Ten months ago, I'd been in the hospital with intravenous tubes in my dehydrated arms. Mom sat at my bedside, avoiding my eyes then as well. She couldn't help but feel responsible.

"I'll write you a cheque," she offered, as always: "I'll buy you groceries for the rest of the year."

Although I'd been on my own since I was 16, I'd never worked out how to make a living. I was in school, thanks to student loans, still trying to get a high school diploma, but with the way things were going, I doubted I'd ever finish.

I noticed her trembling when the bean salad was gone, and she said in that syrupy, be-nice-to-Jody voice, "Let's go look at the dress together, dear. You haven't seen it since the alterations."

"There's some meatloaf back there looking kind of lonesome," I said, holding the refrigerator door open with my knee.

I could see the panic spread across her face. It looked like a herd of white horses rushing all together. "Philip will be over soon, perhaps you should wipe that spaghetti sauce off your mouth, perhaps you should wash up. You wouldn't want your husband-to-be to see you like that."

I noticed she was nervously playing with a sugared bride and groom that was supposed to crown the wedding cake.

"Is it going to be a dark fruit cake with marzipan?" I asked, spitting a piece of bean clear across the room.
"The cake...the cake!" I said, swallowing a mouthful of meatloaf.

"Philip is a wonderful man. A wonderful catch. Do you know how lucky you are?" I got the feeling she was trying to talk me down, like I was some kind of drug addict or something.

"Wonderful," I repeated.

She slunk out of the room, and I knew immediately she was going for the phone. She always behaved in that cagey, suspicious way when I was having one of my "binges." It reminded me a lot of the way she used to hide food when I was growing up. Everything was always so secretive.

I knew she was phoning Dr. Fowler, my shrink. He had said my problem was exacerbated by my mother, and I liked him for that. She was probably telling him to bring a straightjacket.

As out of control as I was, I felt a wonderfully wicked power over her at times like this while I was still radiantly ravenous and gluttonously gorging.

But too soon I collapsed in a heap in front of the toilet and heaved everything up, a little at a time.

She stood over me like a guardian angel, tentative, but too ethereal to really touch me. "Philip is a wonderful man," she said. I could hear her voice quake, as I spewed another load of undigested matter into the toilet.
There was something there, gleaming gold and round. I turned for one last grasp at my former power. I saw her rub her eyes and knit her brows, as she tried to make out what it was.

Her face was as pale as porcelain. She moved slowly away from me, out toward the stairs.

"Don't open my suitcase!" I screamed, but only weakly, for already it was too late. I heard the case open and the ragged bones I'd packed so carefully clatter across the shining foyer floor like sticks.

"He was such a nice boy," I heard my mother weep, "such a dear, sweet boy. Not like the others she's had. Not like the others."
In the following story (2000), “Johnny Pattern,” I attempted to work with the concept of animus in a different way. The psychological elements that intrigued me, and that I hoped to explore in this story, were the dynamics of how the animus becomes projected in cases of romantic love. Here, Johnny Pattern demonstrates Mercurial qualities, that the narrator is oblivious to in herself. She sees in Johnny a trickster, a troublemaker, a risk-taker, and a lover of the sensual world. She herself is conventionally prim, one who has learned that “good girls don’t,...” but her animus projection on Johnny leads her in acting out these unconscious qualities. While projected qualities may not always exist totally in the projection carrier, it is rarely the case that projections are completely without external and objective substance. In the instance of this story, the experiment I conducted was one in which I attempted to hold the tension between the fantasy and reality of an animus projection. As Emma Jung (1981) writes in Animus and Anima:

Especially in a relatively unconscious condition, where outer and inner reality are not sharply distinguished but flow into one another, it is easily possible that a spiritual reality, that is, a thought or an image, can be taken as concretely real. (p. 7)
Johnny Pattern

At times I think I dreamed Johnny Pattern, running wild across the pea-green park, limbs loose as a newborn foal, playing pranks on all the girls.

He sticks his hand in Martha’s desk, yanks out her clear plastic ruler. No one sees but me. I’ve been watching Johnny Pattern.

Miss Clement asks why I’m grinning. I look at the ink stains on my paper, feel an explosion of cherry blooming in my cheeks. "Come here, up front. Tell everyone the joke."

I want to tell her it was Johnny! Johnny Pattern! One of his tricks! But my throat is so tight even air won’t pass. Miss Clement says she’ll write a letter to my mother, asks if I’ve got the devil inside. I see Johnny, sitting in the front row, rolling sparks from his eyes. I could never cry for too long around him. No matter what Miss Clement says, I still have to smile.

At recess Johnny’s a crazy bee tearing up the playing field. He hikes up a buckeye tree, as if he’s got wings. "You’re not afraid to come up here, are you?" He hurls a spiky, green grenade that hits the ground three inches from my feet and breaks. A perfect shining chestnut rolls out smoother than anything I’ve ever touched. I keep it in my coat pocket, roll it around the palm of my hand. After school, it is Johnny, walking behind me, trying to step on the heels of my canvas shoes. "Back off, Johnny," the other girls tell him, but I don’t say a word. I just keep walking with my
lips closed tight. And when we're halfway home, he races past in a zig zag, up Toboggan Hill. I pretend I don't care, but I think of him all night long.

No matter what I do, I think of Johnny Pattern. I see him on a striped summer hammock, brushing my shoulder, my hair. I close my eyes and wish. In the morning I wait to see him ripping over the hill. He flies so fast his feet barely scrape the ground.

"Want to go skinny-dipping?" His sentences are short lassoes, and I never know if he's fooling.

He sprints away, down the clay ravine walls, past planks of wide, white fungus and glistening rocks. In all the world there's no place half as warm or beautiful.

He drops his clothing so easily. I watch from behind the trees. I know every nook of this body—know it completely, and I want to jump into the water beside him and touch every inch of his flesh. If I can't do this, I feel, then the world will end. The sun will burn out. The earth will explode.

He swims and the air smells of cedar. He crawls to a jagged rock. I watch him turn on his stomach, then on his back. Is he wishing I followed? Is he imagining me? I'd give my soul to know. And yet I don't follow Johnny into the water. I stand in the shadows of the sloping trees, hoping in his lazy sighs he will say my name out loud, hoping so much it seems impossible when he doesn't.
Years pass and it's still Johnny. Me and Johnny. Johnny and me. Him, skipping up the front porch steps two at a time, bringing me an orchid and a sharp pearl-headed pin. He punctures the strap of the dress I made myself, hours and hours of stitching and ripping and thinking of him. Thinking of Johnny Pattern.

We dance as if we are joined. Our bodies seamless, twirl. We lose the world, we spin "Oh, Johnny, how I love you!" I've said it so many times. Said it day and night, minute by minute, all my life. "I love you Johnny Pattern! I love you! I love you!"

The floor slips away from our feet, all the dancers disappear. The moon is a private island, whole and perfect.

Up this old mountain in his father's black car toward the moon, Johnny and me.

"Tell me you love me too, Johnny." Up this mountain, black and snaking, tell me you love me before we reach the top.

Johnny's hands are silver. They dazzle with their power to glide, to take.

"Tell me now, Johnny! Tell me this second!"

The buildings below sparkle, the steady stars gaze.

Johnny Pattern has fire engine kisses. They ladder down my neck, my back, right down to my weak heels, but they never stop the flames. I lie in bed, my blood evaporating, everything inside on fire. Ashes and teeth and bits of charred bone piled up in a small heap, that's all that will be left.
I even smell my hair singeing, see the brittle cinders fall and think, "Johnny! What are you doing? Why don't you stop?"

My mother touches my forehead, says I'm burning up with fever, says all last night I screamed for Johnny. "Johnny Pattern," I screamed, "Johnny, you're killing me!"

"Why don't you find yourself a nice boy?" This is the question my mother asks, the question my aunts and uncles ask, the question all the neighbours ask, but I just smile and think of him. Think of Johnny Pattern. In the summer I put on a new dress, splash cologne on my wrists and ankles and stand at the corner of his street, waiting.

Sometimes, when he drives past alone, he pulls up close next to the curb and asks if I want a ride someplace. I never say no, even if I've got no where to go. We could drive all over the city for all I care. Drive to hell and back. Talk about nothing.

Every Friday we meet at a hotel. I know what the man at the desk is thinking when he presses the key in my hand. I know what everyone thinks. But they don't know anything about Johnny. I trace my name, my invisible name, all over Johnny Pattern. He smiles in his sleep. His lips a shade paler than a pink carnation, and I kiss them. I kiss his top lip, starting at the left corner, all the way along, and then I kiss his bottom lip. I kiss his cheeks, his forehead, his neck with a mouth that does not wake him, a mouth he cannot feel.

I watch him dress. He is surrounded by light. A circle of cool light stains the carpet beyond him. Calm light is zipped and buttoned into his
skin. White fire smoulders inside of me. I see Johnny's face, hold it in my hands, but it breaks like chalk. The punishing moon spies through my window. I am in my own room, my own bed, and Johnny Pattern is nowhere here.

He promises we will marry in the spring. He gets down on one knee, just as they do in the old movies, and opens a black velvet box. This is what I imagine will happen when I tell him how much I love him, when I say I can't see myself living without him. I've imagined this for years. Maybe ever since I first saw him. Maybe before. My mother holds my head and curses Johnny. She curses him because she can never know him, because he is a mystery to her.

And now it is me, just me, and I wonder about Johnny Pattern. I go down to the ravine, smell the cedar air and think of him. I imagine peeling off my clothes, wading into the river beside him. And sometimes now, when I look into a mirror, I actually think I see him. I think I see Johnny Pattern, and I think maybe he's coming back. Maybe he's coming back, but by the time I kiss his silver reflection, Johnny Pattern has already disappeared.
In the preceding two stories, I attempted to demonstrate how we might consider working with the concept of animus in our writing. In the following story (2000), “Rudolfo’s Castle,” I consciously attempted to explore my main character Rudolfo’s anima. Rudolfo arrived in my imagination when I was reading about the social-economic situation in Mexico. Unlike many of the active characters who spontaneously emerge from my unconscious, Rudolfo did nothing—he just sat there. I thought perhaps he might not stay long. As I mention above, I have to see if a subject, image, or character has staying power before I commit myself to writing about it. Rudolfo did. He would pop up in my mind at different points of the day, just as an image—an impoverished man sitting on a log. Eventually, I tried to engage him in conversation. I asked him if he would tell me his story, but he sat there almost petulantly silent. Finally, one day, he muttered something that I could not quite hear, but I imagined was Spanish. I quickly summoned a translator into my imagination, and asked him if he could tell me what Rudolfo had said. The translator said: “He’s very depressed.”

I first began thinking of Rudolfo as an animus figure, which undoubtedly he was. “What is this inner masculine aspect that’s depressed?” I’d ask myself, but no further images came to me, and soon I found that thinking of him as an animus figure was doing nothing to assist me in prying his story loose. Somehow, he was too large to try to handle all at once in this way. I reflected on the problem and concluded that perhaps it existed because he was so completely foreign to my middle class, middle-aged, North American ego.

Around the same time that Rudolfo appeared, I had been reading some works on Jung’s conception of the anima. Since it was difficult for me to approach my character as a personal animus figure, I thought perhaps I could instead approach his anima—that perhaps the censor of my ego that was resisting this work would become less prevalent if I adjusted the focus to a more objective site. I began to ask myself what the anima of such a man might look like. Almost immediately I saw the woman he had loved, Candelaria, and her spitting image, her daughter, Juana. I have often found it to be the case that the unconscious will provide information in this way, but only, it seems, when the right question is somehow stumbled upon. I am reminded here of those magical words from
the Arabian Nights “open sesame”—for it seems that sometimes there are magical words or appropriate questions that need to be asked to gain access to the creative unconscious. For student writers, I would suggest exercises that assist them in discovering this interplay with the unconscious. In Jungian analysis, this form of interaction with the unconscious is called “active imagination.” Active imagination finds that middle place between dreams, which are the spontaneous expression of the unconscious, and fantasies, which are a person’s ego-directed imaginings. With active imagination, the ego engages with the unconscious by interacting with the images that spontaneously arise. As James Hall writes (1986): “When situations or persons other than the imaginal-ego react to the ego in active imagination, they must be permitted to react with no interference whatsoever from the ego” (p. 105). This practice is a difficult one, as our egos tend to want to revise and fix. If we ask a question of our inner characters, and they give us responses we do not like or understand, we may be inclined to use our ego’s fantasy-making abilities to put the words we would rather hear into their mouths. While such an approach still might facilitate student work as Creative Writers, I would recommend, as a practice, for students not to succumb to the ego’s interventions. Active Imagination, as a practice, will assist student writers in developing a trusting relationship with their unconscious. They will discover how they can approach the inner world, and with a little probing find a depth and breadth of meaning their ego consciousness had no awareness of formerly.

The combination of unconscious and ego-consciousness gives rise to what Jung (1953) called “the transcendent function” (p. 80). June Singer (1972) in her Boundaries of the Soul succinctly outlines its workings: “This third element...belongs neither to the ego sphere nor to the unconscious and yet possesses access to each. It stands above them, participating in both....The transcendent function’s emergence grants autonomy to the ego and also to the unconscious by relating to both of them independently, and in doing so, unites them” (p. 333).

Janet Dallett (1982) discusses active imagination as “not necessarily art, although some art is active imagination” (p. 84). She is not the only Jungian analyst who believes that it “can be a serious mistake to confuse the products of active imagination with art.” Such a perception, she writes, may “lead one away from one’s real tasks in life” (p. 84), and may make an individual invest more in his artistic product than in attempting to understand and value the active imagination. Later, however, she discusses those people
who find it “absolutely necessary to give [artistic] form to inner images” (p. 85). Such individuals she categorizes as “creative personalities” (185). While I make no pretence of having the clinical background to judge the validity of Dallet’s findings, I do question the notion that some people are “creative personalities” while others are not, and that those who are not should be wary of using active imagination in art’s production. Dallet’s contention that the use of active imagination to produce art is destructive to therapy is the mirror image fear of the Creative Writer instructor who believes that paying too much attention to the role of the unconscious will turn one’s writing into therapy. Being engaged with both Jungian psychology and Creative Writing, I cannot accept the limitations of either of these positions. To me, conceptions such as active imagination are important to both—and can be used by both, I believe, in conjunction. 7

In “Rudolfo’s Castle,” using active imagination, I discovered Rudolfo primarily through his anima. The two women who appeared as Rudolfo’s anima figures possessed qualities that were immediately apparent to me. Both believed themselves trapped by reality; both were wary of imagining anything different. They were also fearful of the way the imagination could lead people astray. Once I knew this about the anima figures, I contemplated Rudolfo and his stubborn silence and depression. I felt his behaviour was extreme, and saw him suddenly in a hospital’s psychiatric ward. I watched him sketch a picture—an elaborate castle made of ice, a place Rudolfo longed for. Von Franz (1999) alerts us to the anima as symbolizing “an unreal dream of love and happiness, of motherly love and security (the nest), an illusion that holds a man back from life” (p. 314). Rudolfo is anima possessed, out of touch with his ego and the world. As Samuels, Shorter, & Plaut (1986) tell us, when one is possessed by the anima, one is “dominated by anima and by the Eros principle with connotations of restlessness, promiscuity, moodiness, sentimentality—whatever could be described as unconstrained emotionality” (p. 24). While I do not consider “Rudolfo’s Castle” one of my most successful artistic works, I did discover, in the writing of it, a way in which to use the Jungian conception of the anima to make contact with this rather impenetrable masculine character.
Rudolfo's face was thin, his cheeks sedulous. When he sighed, his chest faltered. Juana had always been kind to him. She refilled his trembling mug with bitter black coffee, and did not object to the gnarling smoke that swirled from his twisted cigarettes.

He gazed out the plate-glass window of the cafe. Dry dirt crested in the air, and he found himself praying for the white of snow, for the islands of winter, which always at this time of year seemed so far-fetched, as if only in his fantasies they had ever existed.

The first time he had seen snow, he was already a man, his life, for better or worse, already behind him. And perhaps it was because the snow had been powerful enough to blind him, to bring a chill to his soul, that he chose to remain here.

He spoke of going to the Arctic, of building something for himself, a castle of ice. He'd laugh, once he said it, his voice collapsing into airless silence.

Juana made fresh, light tortillas for him especially; she'd serve them while her hands were still damp from patting out masa. He did not eat much, he was an old man, but Juana, insisted he eat what she made.

When she was small, not too many years ago, it seemed, Rudolfo had allowed her to climb on his shoulders. He galloped with her along the street, her hands clinging to his dark curls, her small body flying. There was no one on earth like him. No one who could bring such joy, and she
felt now as she snatched the last sizzling tortillas off the griddle, it was her heart that needed to please him.

He sucked the steaming hot coffee and swallowed the tortillas absently. Juana wiped the counter with a vinegary cloth, feeling the distance grow between them.

He was not the same since his illness. It was as if during those months in hospital he had begun to disappear. “Where are you, old man?” she would ask him. “Where do you go when you leave me.” She would try to bring him back with gentle rebukes.

It was his father he thought of now. His father's brown flesh, and the shack held together by a few rusting nails and cord where they had lived. He did not know why these images came to him. Why suddenly all he could see was the uneven dirt floor turning to mud, slipping away as the rain pelted through holes in the roof, infusing broken, wooden crates, staining the large, black seat of an old pick-up that served as a couch. There were insects as well. Armies of mosquitoes who attacked like spearmen with their fistular siphons, leaving wounds larger than stones.

And his mother, he thought of her too. She had been a beautiful woman. Too beautiful to have struggled so wickedly. Before they had been forced to move from the vecindad her spirit was alive and forceful. He liked to think of here there, but his memories did not always oblige him.

In the hospital, the doctors had encouraged him to speak of his past. He had even been given a tablet of paper and asked to write down
any memories that came, but none were forthcoming then. That was in the winter when the snow on the ground was like thick wool, and he sat in a chair by the barred window watching his warm breath meet the filtering glass in fog. How many hours he sat like that he could not say, but he recalled now the divine feeling of lightness, even before the first treatments. And then the thaw set in and the treatments ended, and he was sent back home to the trailer where he lived.

At first, Juana came to the trailer every day with food. She sat at the foot of his bed, filling the air around him with words. Words like small worms at the end of fishhooks, he thought, designed to catch something inside him and pull it out. He knew she would still be coming to his trailer if he didn't force himself to the cafe. And so he came, guzzling coffee most of the morning, eating whatever foods she fancied to cook for him, and smoking his own clumsily rolled cigarettes made from tobacco he hadn't yet noticed was stale, tobacco he had purchased before his breakdown.

Juana cooked fried eggs, sausage and bacon for the truckers who swept into the cafe. They were large white men who demanded service and whistled and patted her in a way she had grown accustomed to. Her father had been one of them. He had met her mother, Candelaria, in El Paso, Texas, in a restaurant not unlike the cafe. The owner had a string of greasy spoons and could pay illegal immigrants in food. When Juana's father first smiled at her, Candelaria took one look at
his fine, handsome face, and decided he would not leave Texas without
her.

Rudolfo thought of Candelaria often, the way her straight black hair
would cut between her curving shoulders, and how, in spite of the fires of
hell, she could still smile her beautiful smile.

Seeing her daughter serving coffee, frying eggs, it was difficult for
Rudolfo to convince himself this was not Candelaria. And this, perhaps
more than anything, made him uncomfortable around Juana and wish she
would not persist in attending him.

Last night he had dreamed of Candelaria, that she had come in the
darkness to his trailer, weeping. At first he had thought it wasn't a
dream...that the woman before him was Juana, and he took her into his
small bed like a father, holding her cold body tightly against his own, but
he could not seem to warm her. Then he realized it was Candelaria, her
naked shoulders glacial, her lips frozen, and he remembered, at last,
Candelaria was dead.

For a long time after he woke, he lay restless in the arms of mother
night. He saw himself a boy again, and his compadres, sliding down the
steep embankment, wading together in the turbulent, eddying waters of
the muddy swell. Now, as he finished the dregs of his coffee, he could
see the great river again, and again his father's care-worn face, his
mother's anxious eyes, brothers and sisters so many he could not recall
their names, and he longed for the shiver of winter to fill his hollow
bones and clean away with its subsuming whiteness all that was dark and poor within him.

His father had crossed the river many times, sneaking furtively in the evening up cratered northern embankments, sometimes sleeping entire nights in their holes so he would not be discovered by police.

He worked on building sites, in factories, on farms, employed by people who did not mind taking risks with the law in order to save themselves money, and then, sometimes six months later, he would return, always bearing gifts. For Rudolfo's mother he would bring sheer stockings and the most fashionable clothing; for the little ones, he brought sweets. Rudolfo's older sisters got beautiful hair ribbons, and for Rudolfo, the eldest son, there was always something extra special.

How was it now that Rudolfo still could feel the weight of these magical gifts and recall in such precise detail the most exquisite? The small black box, the transistor radio that spoke and sang, bringing all that was desired, like voices of angels, to Rudolfo's ears.

In el norte, people lived differently. There was money and food, nice things, and jobs. Everyone had a chance in el norte, rich or poor. This is what Rudolfo learned from his talking box. And this is why, at an early age, he decided he too would swim the tempestuous river and perhaps in el norte find his gold.

His father would joke about the prospects: "Yes...," he would say, "when I started this game, the police just called me a dirty wetback...but my son...my son....he will be much better than me....Right from the start
they will call him 'an illegal immigrant'!" He would stamp his foot and laugh, wink at Rudolfo.

And then the day arrived when his father was shot while crossing the river. The bullet did not kill him but lodged in his skull like the point of a dull knife that could not quite pierce an apple to its core. Perhaps it had been a group of redneck vigilantes, or a frustrated sheriff who had fired, no one would ever know the truth. His father somehow had been able to crawl back to land. The only people who could have removed the bullet were in el norte, yet his father was too poor to be helped.

The neighbours all said what a miracle it was he had survived. For many months, he lay propped in a bed in the kitchen, a gauze turban twisted around his head.

Rudolfo’s mother lit votive candles and began attending mass again. For a long time, she had not gone because she said she was too busy. Now, she believed it was her neglect that had caused this tragedy.

Then the landlord arrived demanding rent money, which she could not pay. For a time they lived like rodents, hiding and delusive, but before long they were discovered and evicted. That is when Rudolfo and his mother built the shack. His father had to be carried there. Neither of them considered the possibility he might not recover. Both had faith he would live to cross the river again. And yet, every day his mind grew weaker until he could recognize nothing.
The heat of the day lodged itself under Rudolfo's skin and burned him from inside out. He could no longer tolerate the sticky, prickly feeling of cotton against his flesh, and pulled at his collar, cursing it.

Juana smiled at him. It was a sweet, Candelaria smile, he thought. She brought him ice water and assured him that winter would come. She was Candelaria's daughter, yet she knew the words he needed to hear.

He thought of winter, of snow, like large, white moths, encircling lanterns. He thought of the still cold earth. When he had first seen snow, he remembered that spontaneous feeling of joy. Juana poured him another cup of coffee, then turned to the spitting griddle. The smoky scent of bacon reminded him of winter too, and he rested his elbows gently on the counter.

It was almost as if he could feel Candelaria's luxuriant hair brush his face and hear her quiet voice. He closed his eyes and imagined her, but not as she was before death. Death's unfeeling mask distorted as it struggled to reclaim what life had given. To Rudolfo, Candelaria would always be just as she was, the pretty, young girl who organized dances in the vecindad. He would always see her at that age. Too young still to dance with boys, yet always so eager for their attentions.

He remembered the great lengths she would go to in order to secure a record player for the evening. Sometimes, it seemed an impossible task, yet Candelaria's determination would always win out.

When he first danced with her, it was behind the building far from her mother's disapproving eyes. Already, he and his family had suffered
the death of his father and no longer lived as those in the vecindad considered respectable. If her mother had discovered it was Rudolfo Candelaria was seeing, she would surely have beaten her. As it was, Candelaria was routinely punished for being disobedient and wilful.

Rudolfo lifted his unsteady hand in the air, swatted at an imagined insect. The sweltering cafe began to shrink around him. He did not want to think of Candelaria's beautiful turquoise bruises, her glistening cherry blood. Yet these were the images that persisted, overflowing like exuberant tides.

Juana handed him a serviette. Her face was grave, full of concern. He had not realized up to that moment that he was sobbing again. He felt her touch his wrist. Her hand soft and cool as powder; he wanted to lift it to his lips, kiss it with a passion that would melt his flagging soul.

Raucous men filled the cafe with laughter and complaints, with smells and attitudes. "Stop making out with that crazy old man and bring the bill," some trucker shouted from the front. Juana lifted her head, smiled her Candelaria smile, patted Rudolfo's shoulder. The trace of her hand lingered. It made everything seem all right, everything seem good-humoured. Yes, Rudolfo could smile. He could smile like an idiot. He could smile until his gums ached because he was a good-humoured man. He had worked many jobs, met many men, and always was well-liked. Even Candelaria's husband had liked Rudolfo. "You're O.K," he snorted, when Rudolfo laughed at his jokes, when he offered him cigarettes, paid for his newspapers. "You're just one hell-uv-a-guy."
And how Rudolfo and Candelaria laughed at him behind his back. How they mimicked him, "One hell-uv-a guy." And he such a fool, believing all the while Rudolfo was her brother.

Rudolfo lit another cigarette. For a second, it flared and smelled of burning leaves. He recalled first coming to Alberta in the fall when the clouds were so low over the fields it seemed if only he could just reach high enough, he'd capture one. And then, a few weeks later, meeting up with Candelaria again, white crystals glistening like jewels in her hair, teaching him how to make angels in the snow.

Even after all those years, her face and body were the same. Her smile, her expressions, even the way she wore her hair, all unchanged. But something inside had become different. Something inside had become like polished slate, and Rudolfo felt safe and shielded whenever he was with her.

She had never stopped writing to him. He had saved all her letters and spent much of his time now sifting though them. When she had first left home, she did not have this core. She left, like everyone else, to escape. She paid a man to carry her across the river on his shoulders. She took the first job she could find. It was only after she had settled in Alberta with her new husband, Gordy, after several years of rough life, that this metamorphosis took place.

But it was not a coward's resignation to fate, nor was it a cynic's bitterness. If it had been either of these, Rudolfo knew he would only have been able to feel grief for her. There was something else. Something
he was searching for in himself, and he combed through her letters, night after night, trying to find out what it was. He looked at Candelaria's daughter and watched it manifest in her. This core of something hard and precious, this was her mother's gift. To be like a nail and submit to the hammer. He could not be a nail, he could hold nothing together, and because of this he suffered. And yet, in the hospital, he had felt no pain. Days went by, weeks, months, and he remained like an insect suspended between larva and imago, watching the world from a transparent chrysalis. Juana had come. He recalled her visits vaguely. The crisp cinnamon smell of her person, the strength of her voice. But all these things had been subdued, all existed now only under a pale veneer. It made him think of wooden fences sloppily white-washed, of the blinding blue hospital lights, of all the chalky grey cities he had ever passed through, and as much as he would have liked to possess the vision to see beyond this, at times it seemed the greatest blessing he could not.

He drew pictures in the hospital that he had no recollection of drawing. Pictures of soaring towers ascending beyond the outer limits of sky; austere, angular castles with elaborate parapets and turrets. A doctor on staff offered money for one of Rudolfo's pictures, but he wouldn't let him pay. He gave it to the doctor as a gift. The rest of the pictures came home with Rudolfo. A nurse solicitously packed them, and Juana offered to hang them, but Rudolfo asked that she take them away. They seemed foreign to him, meaningless, even frightening. Yet now, he joked of building such a castle for himself. The men in the cafe laughed at him.
"King shit," they called him under their breath. Some had known him before his breakdown; they drank and played cards with him, but never fully trusted him, and now were glad they hadn't. He was such a crazy bastard, always laughing and crying, waving his arms around, talking about crazy things, and they kept their distance.

This man beside him reminded him of Gordy. The brown hairs rolling on his arms like crumbled tobacco, the anxious knuckles of his nicotine-stained hands always eager to fight.

It had been such an excruciatingly hot day, and Gordy, trying to wash himself free of the heat, had been drinking gallons of beer. Candelaria was in the tiny kitchen of the trailer making dinner. Since Rudolfo's arrival, she took more care over the preparation of food. Gordy stormed into the trailer and grabbed Candelaria by the hair, smashed her head against the cupboards. Rudolfo moved to intervene, but Candelaria stopped him. "Get out of here, you ass!" she'd shouted, as if he were the one beating her. He stumbled down the trailer stairs in a daze, his knees vibrating as he listened to the splintering violence. There had been few times in his life when he had felt so helpless and cowardly, few times he had felt so rejected and afraid.

The sky that evening, he recalled, was bright with stars. He looked up into the heavens because there seemed nowhere else to look. He dragged his uncooperative feet along a path, out past some scraggy bush, lit a cigarette and inhaled as deeply as he possibly could. A lover's
night, he thought, and felt a gnawing ache of desire for all he couldn't have.

Later, he crept back into the trailer. Gordy had passed out on the living room couch, Candelaria was collecting large fragments of broken china and glass in her stained apron. He'd asked her then to leave with him. He said he'd take her anywhere in the world she wanted to go. Her bruised face was bent low toward the ground, just as if she were praying, and Rudolfo heard her say “dreamer.”

How much he had wanted to convince her of this dream. He still believed it could have been possible. But Candelaria did not trust dreams. Still, he persisted in begging her, whenever he saw her, whenever they made love.

"And what would we do for money?" she asked, "How would Juana be fed? Where would we live?" She would abandon Rudolfo suddenly in his dishevelled bed. At times, her withdrawal from him was so abrupt it left him breathless.

"We'd survive," he'd shout. His voice ringing with pain, even to his own ears.

"I'm surviving now," she told him.

After that first night, he began hating Candelaria's husband. Just to look at him filled Rudolfo with poison, but he was careful never to show what he felt. Sometimes, he'd wait for Gordy to get so drunk he'd forget himself. Then it was easy to pound his face into the ground. In the morning, he would lie, call Gordy "friend," tell him that three large men
had set upon him from behind. But as the signs of Candelaria's abuse became more extreme, this kind of revenge became less satisfying. In the end, however, it was Candelaria who said she wished him dead.

Rudolfo's stomach was tight with grief. He wanted to leave the cafe, leave the world, wander some place where these thoughts wouldn't follow, but Juana kept him here, and he knew wherever he went, she would hold him.

The man that looked like Gordy leaned toward Rudolfo. "Tell me," he asked, still watching Juana, "How crazy does a man have to be to get a date with your girlfriend?"

Rudolfo could not respond. He could not smile. Nor could he fight. His mind created sharp icicles to cut away this stranger, to make his words unintelligible.

"Can't he hear me?" the man asked Juana. He pushed Rudolfo. "Can't you hear me, you crazy fuck? Why the hell aren't you in an institution?"

But it was as if Rudolfo had completely vanished, and the man beside him, getting no response, became afraid. "Oh, fuck you!" he finally said, giving up, moving quickly from the counter as if he might catch this madness.

Rudolfo pulled at the cloth of his damp shirt. Outside, dust formed powdered clouds and swept through the town, past the highway, over the fields to someplace distant. "How many months until winter?" he asked Juana, and she leaned across the counter, kissed his sweating
forehead with her Candelaria lips, igniting the sky with winter pink.

"We could go away," he said to her, grabbing her dry, cool hand.
"We could go north." His muddy eyes were like two eclipsing suns and he barely felt the gentle tug as she slipped free; for he was already there, in the blustery circle of white.
Jung’s Typology
Chapter Four

One of the striking features of human behaviour is that two people can perceive exactly the same thing, yet interpret their experiences so differently. This is a phenomenon that intrigued Jung and he sought to establish groupings that would describe and even predict individual psychological preferences. While he acknowledged that neither grouping was exclusive or fixed, he delineated two broad categories of “extraversion” and “introversion” to express psychological attitudes. “Attitude-types,” as Jung (1971) differentiated them, are found by observing a person’s inclination or the direction in which his libido moves him (p. 330). The extravert’s libido moves towards objects in the outer world, while the introvert’s move inward from outer world objects. Jung writes: “The introvert’s attitude is an abstracting one; at bottom, he is always intent on withdrawing libido from the object, as though he had to prevent the object from gaining power over him. The extravert, on the contrary, has a positive relation to the object. He affirms its importance to such an extent that his subjective attitude is constantly related to and oriented by the object. The object can never have enough value for him, and its importance must always be increased” (p. 330).

The extravert is social, gregarious, and talkative while the introvert is quiet, reserved, and introspective. The extravert seems to exude confidence while the introvert appears shy. Words spring easily to the lips of the extravert while the introvert often finds words arriving only long after the moment to speak has passed. According to Jung (1971), “[the introvert] sees everything in terms of his own situation, the [extravert] in terms of the objective events” (p. 5).

Along with these “attitude-types” Jung also proposed “function-types.” These include thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition. Thinking and feeling are “rational” functions, according to Jung. He describes them as rational, because they use reason to classify and decide. A character with a predominant thinking function is likely to make choices and form judgements based on logical analysis, while the feeler is apt to form judgements and make choices based on personal and ethical values. A character who
displays a predominant feeling function is more likely to be considered "a nice person" than the predominant thinker, who is more apt to be considered "cold." The thinker, however, in our society, is often highly regarded for his ability to make dispassionate and "objective" judgements while the feeler is often considered "too soft" and too "subjective."

Sensation and intuition are also "function-types," but Jung classified these as "irrational" functions. He described them as "irrational" because they express feeling rather than judgement. "[W]hat they do or do not do is based not on rational judgment but on the sheer intensity of perception. Their perception is directed simply and solely to events as they happen, no selection being made by judgement" (p. 370). The sensation type experiences the world predominantly through physical senses, while the intuitive experiences the world through a resonance of unconscious perceptions. For example, the sensation type might experience the physical practicalities and comforts of a new home with a large kitchen, and a number of bathrooms, while the intuitive, captivated by the unconscious appeal of an old gothic mansion, might happily ignore drafts, leaking roofs, and general physical discomfort as the cost of enjoying his numinous living conditions.

The "sensate" might appear as a character very much in touch with his physical environment, while the intuitive might appear "absent minded." In the cold months, the "sensate" will dress appropriately for the temperatures with coat, hat and gloves. The "intuitive," on the other hand, might be so preoccupied by the evocative symbolism of the season that the physical practicalities of keeping warm don't register. In North American society, the "intuitive" comes across as rather weird, but also as more enigmatic and mysterious than the earth-bound sensate. Surrealism might be considered the art and literature of the intuitive while realism might belong to that of the trusty and reliable sensate.

Jung suggested there were potentially eight different types of personality. There were thinking, intuitive types, there were feeling, sensate types, there were thinking, sensate types, and there were feeling, intuitive types. All of these types could be further classified as introverted or extraverted. He outlines variations in "General Description of the Types" and also discusses attitudes and functions in terms of their conscious and unconscious dynamics.

"[T]he products of all functions can be conscious, but we speak of the 'consciousness' of a function only when its use is under the control of the will and, at the
same time, its governing principal is the decisive one for the orientation of consciousness (p. 405). Jung explains that while each person possesses a rational and an irrational function, only one of these functions can predominate at one time, since “it is a vital condition for the conscious process of adaptation always to have clear and unambiguous aims” (p. 405).

**Jungian typological evolutions**

Considerable further work has been done based on the foundations established by Jung. His typological classifications have enabled the development of a number of psychological instruments that seek to quantify personality variables. Perhaps the best known of these is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a psychometric questionnaire that has been used extensively in education and the study of differing teaching and learning styles (Myers, 1980, pp. 137-156). This tool builds upon Jung’s typological research, and adds to the inventory of attitude and function types with the two additional categories of “judging” and “perceiving.” People with a preference for “judging” are more goal-oriented and seek closure, while “perceiving” people like to keep their options open and are more process-oriented.

Kroeger, Thuesen, & Rutledge (1989) in *Type Talk at Work*, outline different aspects of typological attitude and function elucidated by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Extraverts (or Es), for example, “tend to talk first, think later, and don’t know what [they’ll] say until they hear themselves say it.” They tend “to know a lot of people and count many of them among [their] closest friends” (p. 6). They can be “oblivious” to background distractions while reading or having a conversation. They dominate conversations, but “are approachable and easily engaged” by people (p. 16.). They like to use the telephone, to go to meetings and express their opinions, and “feel frustrated if not given the opportunity to state [their] point of view” (p. 7). They like group work and need to bounce their ideas off others. They “look with [their] mouths instead of [their] eyes—‘I lost my glasses. Has anyone seen my glasses?’(p. 17). They need people to tell them “who [they] are, what [they] do, how [they] look. Until they hear someone say it, they can’t quite bring themselves to believe anything” (p. 17).

Introverts (or Is), conversely, “rehearse things before saying them” and “often respond with ‘I’ll have to think about that’ or ‘Let me tell you later’” (p. 17). They like time to themselves and develop “a high power of concentration that can shut out nearby
conversations” (p. 8). People think introverts are good “listeners” but also that they’re easily taken advantage of. Introverts are “reserved” and “reflective.” Usually they have just one or two very close friends and “like stating...thoughts or feelings without interruptions. Introverts feel “drained” and need “recharging” after intense meetings or any kind of extraverting. They tend not to trust people easily, particularly people who try to compliment or flatter them (p. 18).

Sensates (or Ss) require exact and specific details (not approximations), and they often give these to others—sometimes to an excessive degree (p. 9). They are doers rather than thinkers; they invest their energy into practical jobs “that yield some tangible result” and would rather deal with “facts and figures” instead of “ideas and theories”; they would rather “hear things sequentially instead of randomly” (p. 19). They mistrust people who spend too much time with their imaginations. They get frustrated when clear instructions are not given, or when people interpret what they perceive as clear instructions as “guidelines.” Sensates “are very literal in [their] use of words; [they] also take things literally” (p. 20). They “find it easier to see the individual trees than the forest” and they tend to think that “seeing is believing” (p. 20).

Intuitives (or Ns) “think about several things at once” (p. 20), and tend to be more interested in the future than the present moment. They “find the future and its possibilities more intriguing than frightening” (p. 20). They like the big picture and find details boring. They like to create puns and play with language. They tend to search for meaning and interrelatedness in all things. Their answers tend to be vague and general. They “would rather fantasize about spending [their] next pay check” instead of balancing their check books (p. 21).

Thinkers (or Ts) tend to stay calm in a crisis. They tend to objectify situations and “would rather settle a dispute based on what is fair and truthful than on what will make people happy (p. 21). They might be perceived as uncaring, while they consider themselves caring, but objective. They think it is better “to be right than liked” and do not feel it is necessary to like the people they work with. They value quantitative scientific approaches and tend to be very sceptical of qualitative research. They have a better memory for numbers than names (p. 22).

Feelers (or Fs) usually take the feelings of others into account when they make decisions. They work hard to meet the needs of others, often at the expense of their own.
They like to give their time and energy to people, but find that people often take advantage of them. They “prefer harmony to clarity” and dislike conflict.

Kroeger also defines the additional “perceiving” (P) and “judging” (J) categories that were identified by Katherine Briggs and Isabelle Meyers. Judgers are punctual; they keep lists and use them; they thrive on order and feel if they cannot stick to their plans, bad things will happen (p. 24). Perceivers, on the other hand, “love to explore the unknown.” They tend not to plan things but wait for opportune situations to arise. They “turn most work into play.” They don’t like to be nailed down to anything. They appear disorganized to outside observers, but have their own stylized systems. They tend to change topics quite often in conversation. They are distracted easily (p. 25).

It should be noted that typology only reflects an individual’s preferences; it does not confer a set of static and absolute behaviours. As Ann B. Loomis (1999) writes: “Psychological type does not put us into a box; it sorts us according to our innate tendencies and preferences” (p. 3).

Right and left-handedness is an analogy often used to explain personality typologies. A right-handed person will instinctively reach with his right hand, but if his right hand is incapacitated, or being used for something else, or if he simply decides he wants to exercise his left hand, then that is what he’ll use. If people are predominantly right-handed, they will discover that using the left hand does not initially feel natural or comfortable. They may discover that the left hand is weaker than the right and that after using the left hand for an extended period of time, they are much more tired than they would have been if they had used the right. They may discover there are things they could easily do with the right that they cannot do with the left. Over time, however, if they continue to use the left hand, it will begin to feel more natural. Certain life situations are best handled with specific types and functions. For example, filling out one’s income tax form is a task that is most expediently done by accessing one’s sensation function. As Marie Louise von Franz says: “if an intuitive fills out a tax form he needs a week” rather than a day (p. 2). It is not that an intuitive can not fill out the form; it is just that it takes him longer and causes him more discomfort to access his less developed sensation function (p. 2). A final point is that there are gender typological biases. For example, “feeling” is considered more natural to women, while “thinking” is considered more natural to men (Kroeger, Thuesen, & Rutledge, 1989, p. 41). There can also be cultural or national biases. In the United States, for example, “extraversion” is valued over
Statistics examining Myer's Briggs type indicators suggest that 70 percent of the U.S. population are "sensates" while 30 percent are "intuitives" (p. 29).

The Myers-Briggs system enables us to identify our preferences. That said, we must recognize that along with the dominant type, its antithesis can exist at an unconscious level in one and the same person. Jung, in fact, encouraged people to use their less developed functions in the interests of individuation, an approach that, as will be shown, can be highly relevant to student writers in their understanding of character development in Creative Writing.

An individual has one dominant function—a function which he prefers using. He also has a secondary function. This is the function he favours when his dominant function is not sufficient. Some people do not have well-developed tertiary functions, but for some, after enough time has elapsed, life will present situations that require the development of the third. The fourth function is considered the inferior function. According to von Franz (1971), it is the inferior function that "makes the bridge to the unconscious" (p. 10), and "it is always the carrier of symbolic experiences which may come from within or without" (p. 11).

Knowledge of Jung's typology and its post-Jungian evolutions can be extremely useful in both the practice and teaching of Creative Writing. Perhaps the most obvious contribution to be made is in the area of character. Stephen Minot (1993) observes that "consistency, complexity and individuality" are the essential ingredients in "making a character 'come alive' on the page" (p. 208). By "consistency," Minot means "patterns of behaviour, outlook, dress and the like" (p. 208). By "complexity," he suggests the development "of more than one aspect of a character" (p. 209). And by "individuality," he is suggesting those believable, yet surprising details which make a character memorable to us (p. 210). Exploring characters under Jung's typological schema can provide a kind of psychological blueprint of their inner worlds and an authentication of the actions, conflicts, responses, and reactions, which, as Minot notes, are essential ingredients of a literary character.

An acquaintance of typology and its dynamics can assist the student writer in assuring complexity and consistency in characters by understanding how these characters might respond in various situations and settings. An introvert, for example, will always naturally move towards the internal, while an extravert will naturally choose the external. The feeler will prefer to value people and things to which he has a personal emotional
connection, while the thinker will automatically weigh up the pros and cons of a situation in a detached way. The sensate will be experiencing the concrete physical world as he touches it and quantifies it, while the intuitive will be experiencing the physical concrete world with the fingers of his psyche and questing for its meaning. If some circumstance arises that requires the character to use his inferior attitude or function, there will be discomfort, but also, likely, psychological growth. Individuality, then, will emerge from a character’s typology and the details that these attitudes and functions interact with.

Typological Analysis of Characters in Anne Tyler’s The Accidental Tourist

It would be advantageous for student writers to pay close attention to the typology of literary characters they have found particularly authentic. It would also be helpful for instructors to assign readings in which they have found authentic characters. A novel to be recommended to students for this purpose is *The Accidental Tourist*, by Ann Tyler (1985).

This novel explores the difficulties faced by its main character, Macon Leary, and the subsequent re-evaluation of his life and relationships. Macon is an introverted sensate thinking type. In Myers-Briggs terms, he would be an ISTJ. We can determine his typology by taking note of his interactions. As Marie Louise von Franz (1971) tells us, “the natural tendency is to defer doing, or to push off on other people, the [attitude and functions] in which one does not feel superior” (p. 6). We can also begin to perceive a character’s typology by taking note of his or her recurring actions and preferences. When the novel opens, Macon and his wife Sarah are returning home early from their holiday at the beach. The first hint to Macon’s typological functions is provided at the outset by his physical appearance. “[He] wore a formal summer suit, his travelling suit—much more logical for travelling than jeans...” (Tyler, 1985, p. 3). Both “sensation,” with its formality and tradition, and “thinking,” with its logic, emerge as Macon’s dominant function preferences in determining apparel. One of these functions will reveal itself to be primary, the other, secondary.

At the opening of the novel, Macon and Sarah are travelling in the rain, and Sarah suggests the weather is making travelling dangerous and that Macon should pull over and wait out the storm. Macon assures her that if he believed the storm was dangerous, he would have pulled over, to which Sarah replies:
“Well, I don’t know that you would have ... I don’t know that you really care that much....Do you?”
Macon said “Care?”
“I said to you the other day, I said, ‘Macon, now that Ethan’s dead I sometimes wonder if there’s any point to life.’ Do you remember what you answered?”
“Well, not offhand,” Macon said.
“You said, ‘Honey, to tell the truth, it never seemed to me there was all that much point to begin with.’ Those were your exact words.”
“Um...”
“And you don’t even know what’s wrong with that.”
“No, I guess I don’t,” Macon said (p. 5).

This interaction points to Macon’s dominant thinking function in contrast to his wife’s dominant feeling function. As von Franz (1971) says of dominant thinkers, “they have no idea if they have feeling or what kind of feeling it is. If you ask a thinking type what he feels, he generally either replies with a thought or gives a quick conventional reaction; and if you then insist on knowing what he really feels, he does not know” (p. 1).

Sarah questions Macon’s ability to “care.” As a “feeler,” her definition of “caring” would be completely different from Macon’s. “Caring,” for people with dominant feeling functions, is an activity that is central to their lives. It is inconceivable to “feeler” that they can stop caring and want to live. “Thinkers,” on the other hand, would not make this distinction. They would say: “Objectively, we do many things in the course of a day that we do not care about. In fact, the bulk of our lives is spent in small, trivial details that no one cares about.” The feeler would read Macon’s response, “it never seemed to me there was all that much point [to life] to begin with...” (p. 5), as emotional and full of anguish, while Macon most probably intended it as a logical and detached observation about the human condition. His stalling reply “Care?” is both telling of his thinking function and his dominant attitude of introversion. Pulling up the inferior function takes a great deal of meditation and requires a great deal of time (von Franz, 1971, p. 2). Introverts are also slower in responding than extraverts. They need time to process complexities into words. Their dominant function is introverted and their secondary function is extraverted, which also creates a delay in their response time. The relative number of words used in this exchange (Macon uses 9 words in this conversation; Sarah uses over 70) reinforces the picture of Macon as an introvert.

If Macon had been an extraverted feeler, he would have immediately understood what Sarah meant by the word “caring,” and he may not have required the processing time. Sarah’s dominant “feeling” places a value on “caring” and “life” that makes her see
Macon's dominant "thinking" responses as obviously wrong, and she is frustrated by the fact that he can not see what she sees. When she challenges him with, "And you don’t even know what’s wrong with that," Macon responds completely oblivious to the feeling function, and completely in accord with the thinking function: "No, I guess I don’t" (p. 5).

Later, in the same scene, Sarah tells Macon she wants a divorce. "Macon braked and glanced over at her" (p. 6). Sarah explains that she can’t live with him anymore, and he tries to deal with this with the objective logic of his thinking function. "Honey, Listen. It’s been a hard year. We’ve had a hard time. People who lose a child often feel this way; everybody says so; everybody says it’s a terrible strain on a marriage—" If Macon had been a feeler, his response would have been personal, rather than objective. Instead of invoking the collective and trying to objectify the situation, he would have said "I feel..." and personalized it.

After Macon breaks his leg and goes to live with his sister and brothers in their old familial home, Garner, a neighbour from his former neighbourhood, arrives with his mail. He makes observations that further reveal Macon as an introvert with a dominant thinking function. Garner tells Macon that his response to his son’s death seemed totally inappropriate to the neighbours. "A thinking type often cannot express his feelings normally and in the appropriate manner at the right time" (von Franz, 1971, p. 16).

"Peg Everett tells you she’s put you in her prayers and Sarah says, ‘Oh, bless you, Peg,’ but what do you say? You ask Peg if her son might care to take Ethan’s bike off your hands.”
Macon groaned. “Yes,” he said, “I never know how to behave at these times.”
“Then you mow your lawn like nothing has happened.”
“The grass did keep growing, Garner” (Tyler, 1985, p. 74).

From a Jungian point of view, we might deduce that Macon’s thinking function is far too dominant for his own good. As von Franz (1971) writes, when there is an "increase in the development of the superior function," there is also a "slow degeneration of the other side of the personality" (p. 6). While the thinking function is necessary and useful, a thinker cannot dispense completely with feeling, for in certain situations, a feeling response is necessary, just as certain situations demand thinking. Accessing the inferior function, however, is not all that immediate and straightforward. An individual with a dominant thinking function integrates feeling by first going to the secondary function of “sensation or intuition…. Then he moves to the opposite of the secondary
function, and lastly to the inferior one. But he cannot cross directly to the opposite...” (p. 23). Just knowing this minor detail of Macon’s character, in the context of Jung’s individuation theory and typology dynamics, will lead us into a plot trajectory that has to do, in some way, with Macon integrating more of his unconscious feeling-function. Also, knowing about Jung’s compensatory premises and the “shadow,” we can deduce that Macon’s unconscious must be teeming with undifferentiated feeling...feeling which Macon can not control.

We see in the fantasies he constructs about Sarah both his shadow intuition (which “imagines” in non-constructive, child-like ways) as well as the way he projects his unconscious feeling on Sarah. “He liked to imagine her self-reproaches. He composed and re-composed her apologies. He hadn’t had such thoughts since he was a child, dreaming of how his mother would weep at his funeral” (Tyler, 1985, p. 68). Later, after he breaks his leg, he imagines Sarah being tremendously concerned and considers how he would rebuff her (p. 109). Being the thinker he is, he tries to rationalize these fantasies and at the same time diminish his inferior feeling function. Von Franz (1971) writes that the inferior function is “despised” and considered “ridiculous” by one’s ego consciousness (p. 10), and we certainly see that is the case with Macon. He considers his fantasies expose his “self-pity (an emotion he despised ordinarily)” and believes “physical exhaustion” is to blame (Tyler, 1985, p. 109).

After Sarah leaves him and he becomes the sole inhabitant of their home, we begin to see more of his secondary sensation function emerging. “Now was his chance to reorganize, he told himself. He was struck by an incongruous little jot of interest. The fact was that running a house required some sort of system, and Sarah had never understood that” (p. 9). He attempts to implement some practical labour- and energy-saving methods. He decides to wash his clothes in the bathtub while taking a shower, and stitches together sheets to create a “body bag” to sleep in. “A body bag required no tucking in, was unmussable, easily changeable, and the perfect weight for summer nights” (p. 11). But soon, he begins to consider that he might be taking things too far and begins to move into his intuition by theorizing how Sarah’s lack of method may have kept him balanced. “Maybe all these years, they’d been keeping each other on a reasonable track. Separated, demagnetized somehow, they wandered wildly off course. He pictured Sarah’s new apartment, which he had never seen, as chaotic to the point of madness” (p. 11). Macon’s theory touches on a typological premise that Marie Louise von Franz (1971) outlines:
One tends to marry the opposite type, and then ... thinks for the moment [he is] freed from the disagreeable task of confronting his own inferior function. That is one of the great blessings and sources of happiness in the early stages of a marriage; suddenly the whole weight of the inferior function is gone, one lives in a blessed oneness with the other, and every problem is solved! But if ... the need comes up in one of them to develop the inferior function instead of just leaving those sections of life to the other, the trouble starts. (p. 7)

Sarah carries the extraverted attitude and all of the feeling in her and Macon’s relationship, as well as what the Myers-Briggs type indicator calls “perceiving.” In the process of individuation, one can be hampered by the complacency of partnership, where two people learn to become halves of a unit, and do not strive to develop wholeness in themselves. As Rainer Maria Rilke (1934) puts it, instead of becoming “two solitudes” that “protect and border and salute each other” (p. 59)—a couple who have “flung themselves together... no longer mark off and distinguish themselves from each other (p. 57). When this occurs, one might credit the “self,” “god” or the “great story maker” with providing the necessary crisis to further individuation. Marie Louise von-Franz observed succinctly in an interview: “If life gives you a hint, take it, or it will hit you.” The idea that crises arise, particularly after situations have hinted at our typological shortcomings, in order to further our psychological growth, is an interesting notion. Such a notion fits extremely well with Creative Writing conventions of plot and character development. Perhaps we could go as far as to say that “round characters” or characters who “change, develop, or act from conflicting motives” (Booth, Hunter, & Mays, 2006, p. 141) are those working to integrate inferior functions or attitudes while “flat characters” or those who “behave in unchanging or unsurprising ways” (p. 141) have not yet been faced with these challenges.

In The Accidental Tourist we get a sense that Macon and Sarah have been juggling each other’s inferior functions and attitudes, and feeling frustration with each other’s dominant ones for a long time. For example, we see this when Macon reflects upon his “sensation” teeth-flossing ritual:

He couldn’t go to bed without flossing his teeth. For some reason Sarah found this irritating. If Macon were condemned to death, she’d said once, and they told him he’d be executed by a firing squad at dawn, he would no doubt still insist upon flossing the night before. Macon, after thinking it over, had agreed. Yes, of course he would. Hadn’t he flossed while in the depths of pneumonia? In the hospital with gallstones? In a motel the night his son was killed? (Tyler, 1985, p. 16)
A page later in the novel we learn,
When Ethan was born, he only brought out more of their differences. Things they had learned to ignore in each other resurfaced. Sarah never got their son on any kind of schedule at all, was lax and unconcerned. And Macon (oh, he knew it, he admitted it) had been so intent on preparing him for every eventuality that he hadn’t had time to enjoy him. (p. 17)

Macon and Sarah also struggle with each other’s attitude type. Macon reflects on how sociable, extraverted Sarah once perceived him as “mysterious” because he was quiet (an introvert) but “[w]hen he was quiet now it seemed to annoy her,…but there was nothing he could do about it. In some odd way he was locked inside the standoffish self he’d assumed when he and she first met. He was frozen there” (p. 53).

Eventually, Macon will meet Muriel and begin to thaw. Muriel is an extraverted feeler whose dominant function is intuition—and while she is clearly Macon’s typological opposite, her circumstances as a single mother and her economic survival have demanded she integrate much more of her unconscious personality than Macon or Sarah have ever had to do. Macon first meets her at the Meow-Bow animal hospital where she works. She is described as “a thin young woman in a ruffled peasant blouse” with “aggressively frizzy black hair that burgeoned to her shoulders like an Arab headdress” (p. 28). Later, when she emerges from behind the counter, “she was wearing very short red shorts; her legs were like sticks” (p. 29). This initial physical description hints at the dominance of her intuitive function. Dominant intuitives are less likely to present themselves in conventional ways. They would not necessarily choose clothes that they look good in or are practical or hairstyles that are flattering. They are much more likely to make these choices based on symbolic psychic values and/or the fantasies these objects evoke. Later, when Macon meets her again, she is wearing “a V-necked black dress splashed with big pink flowers, its shoulder padded and its skirt too skimpy,” and she is also wearing “preposterously high-heeled sandals” (p. 41). Her long (one assumes false) finger nails, painted “dark red” make it impossible for her to properly process Macon’s credit card, because “[e]verything had to be done with the flats of her hands…” (p. 41).

Her extraversion, intuition, and feeling are further accentuated in the first conversations she has with Macon. When she meets him, she greets him with an
extraverted “Hi, there” (p. 28). Macon, responds with an introverted, thinking “Do you board dogs?” (p. 28).

“Sure” (p. 28), Muriel says, with the expansive quality of an extravert.

“I’d like to board Edward, here,” … he says (p. 28).

“You have a reservation?” (p. 28) she asks, doing her job, which requires a more objective approach than intuitive feeling. Macon admits he has no reservations. He’s been forced to bring his dog here because the usual place that boards his dog has refused it.

Muriel explains that it’s difficult to board a pet without a reservation, especially in the summer, but she’s going to make an exception for Macon. Feelers are notorious exception makers since they judge each case personally, without the institutional objective criterion that is so important to the thinker.

“From the glance she shot at [Macon, after he told her he was desperate], he sensed he had surprised her in some way” (p. 29). This glance is the glance of an intuitive. Muriel has made some kind of internal connection, finding something more in what Macon has said than met the eye. Her following question, “Can’t you leave [the dog at] home with your wife?” (p. 29) confirms the direction of her questing intuition.

The fact he is a sensate and not an intuitive, a thinker and not a feeler, an introvert and not an extravert, is expressed in the following line: “He wondered how on earth her mind worked.” He responds to her from the dominance of his thinking function: “If I could [leave the dog with my wife],’ he said, ‘why would I be standing here?’” (p. 29)

She responds, clinging tenaciously to her probing intuition: “Oh,… You’re not married?” (p. 29).

Macon finds himself being forced to explain that Sarah lives in a place that doesn’t allow pets. Muriel, again intuitively probing while expressing her secondary feeling function, says: “I’m a divorcée myself … I know what you’re going through” (p. 29).

Later, Muriel establishes her dominant intuitive function, as well as something of the psychological evolution she’s undergone, by telling Macon a story of her youth: “When I was a little girl … I didn’t like dogs … I thought they could read my mind” (p. 103). This fear is a particularly intuitive sort of fantasy. In a classic “extraverted intuitive” digression, she discusses many things, including her parents, how she was raised, and her general appearance, before she returns to the matter at hand, which is how she learned to train animals (p. 103). The symbolic significance of training a dog should
also be considered in this context. A dog is the extraverted feeling animal par excellence. His wagging tail betrays his pleasure, as does his exuberant behaviour. Cats, conversely, appear to be less “feeling,” and definitely more detached and “introverted.” The fact that Muriel is able to influence a dog’s behaviour with her training demonstrates her command of both extraversion and the feeling function, for it is the person with a well-differentiated feeling function who can make a dog sit as long as is necessary—but only if she believes it is of the utmost benefit for the dog; a thinker, on the other hand, finds these kinds of measures difficult to impose. Thinkers succumb to their undifferentiated feeling, as Macon does, and struggles with their unconscious “feeling” projections. The fact that Muriel is teaching Macon how to train his dog is significant. When the dog tries to bite her, “Muriel instantly raised the leash. She jerked it upward with both fists and lifted Edward completely off the floor. He stopped barking. He started making gargling sounds. ‘He’s choking,’ Macon said. Edward’s throat gave an odd sort of click. ‘Stop it. It’s enough! You’re choking him!’ [Macon said]. Still, she let him hang” (p. 122).

Muriel explains that she learned to trains dogs after she answered an ad in the newspaper. Much of what Muriel has done, and much of her psychological development, has come about through the necessity of earning money to support herself and her son. Unlike Macon, she has not had a partner to carry her undifferentiated attitude and functions. She has had to be both extravert and introvert, intuitive and sensate, feeler and thinker. Her dominant intuitive function has made her ingenious, while her combined extraversion has made her entrepreneurial. It is, however, a particular kind of entrepreneurial activity that she engages in, which reflects her developed feeling function, and her ability to draw upon the precision of a sensate and the objective boundaries of a thinker, while facilitating “feeling” human connections. For example, she tells Macon she will give him a discount to train his dog, because she gives discounts to all her friends. At first, Macon doesn’t like this idea. He doesn’t consider himself her friend—and doesn’t want her to think of him that way. Yet, when she collects the money they’ve agreed upon, he’s four cents short. Instead of letting it go in the interests of friendship, she says she will collect the outstanding four cents when she returns the following day (p. 104). This kind of discernment of boundaries and material precision is not in the realm of the ordinary dominant intuitive feeler, but of one who has integrated or “stretched” into opposing functions, as Kroeger discusses in Type Talk at Work. “‘A Good Stretch’ is a two-edged sword. Just as with physical activity, stretching can make
one limber and toned, but too much stretching can cause severe pain and discomfort. Too much of a good stretch can be stressful. How much is too much? It differs with each individual and must be monitored accordingly” (p. 252). In the case of Muriel, the reader is given clues about her typological stretching. She tells Macon how she came to carry the dark projections in her family. She had been born blonde, but her hair suddenly turned dark. Her sister, whose hair has remained “blonde as an angel” is seen by their parents as “wonderful.” “She’s the good one and I’m the bad one,” Muriel explained to Macon. But instead of feeling sorry for herself because of this slight, she both uses her questing intuition and involves her less developed thinking function in order to objectively understand it. She “stretches” in this instance because it is a way for her to process the pain of her more natural, personal, “feeling” approach. “People just get fixed in these certain frames of other people’s opinions, don’t you find that’s true?” (p. 106).

The crisis of a bad marriage and the traumatic birth of her son, Alexander, have also made Muriel integrate more objective functions. She explains to Macon that she married because she was pregnant, and “something went wrong” with her son while she was carrying him (p. 170). She had to have a Caesarean Section and suffered severe complications, as did the baby. The doctors “didn’t give [the baby] much of a chance and some had even wondered if we wanted a chance, what with all that might go wrong with him,” Muriel explained. Muriel had to deal with mounting hospital bills, so she took a job cleaning at the hospital in order to be close to her son. Her husband was not supportive, and in the end divorced her, taking no responsibility for the paternity of their child. In a number of ways, these experiences and the practicalities of existing in the world, without a partner and with a sick child, force Muriel beyond the bounds of the subjectivity of her intuitive and feeling functions. “I’ve had to be inventive. It’s been scrape and scrounge, nail and knuckle, ever since Norman left me” (p. 189). In order to survive, economically, emotionally, physically, she must embrace something more of an objective position. She must learn to be a jack-of-all-trades, not only in her dealings with the commercial world, but in her dealings with her own emotions and the events and crisis as they enfold in her life. Sarah, on the other hand, does not “stretch” beyond her feeling function after the death of her and Macon’s son, Ethan.

[Ever since Ethan died I’ve had to admit that people are basically bad. Evil, Macon. So evil they would take a twelve-year old boy and shoot him through the skull for no reason. I read a paper now and I despair; I’ve given up on TV. There’s so much wickedness, children setting other children on fire and grown
men throwing babies out second-story windows, rape and torture and terrorism, old people beaten and robbed, men in our very own government willing to blow up the world, indifference and greed and instant anger on every street corner. ... You can’t believe in a soul. ...There are times when I haven’t been sure I could...live in the world any more. (p. 140)

It could be that eventually Sarah will have to take a different functional perspective towards her grief to survive, but when she expresses the above thoughts to Macon, she is not ready to do so. In fact, her rejection of Macon could be seen as a rejection of those objective typological functions and the introverted attitude she does not want to entertain in herself. During Sarah and Macon’s discussion, Macon agrees with her. He says: “It’s true ... what you say about human beings. I’m not trying to argue. But tell me this Sarah: Why would that cause you to leave me?” (p. 140). As an introvert, Macon has never trusted people; as a thinker, he can objectively see how Sarah has drawn her conclusions about all people being evil. But Sarah does not want this response. She tells him she wants to leave him: “Because I knew you wouldn’t try to argue. You’ve believed all along they were evil” (p. 140). Sarah does not want even to entertain this detachment from humanity, which would allow her to objectively consider people as basically “evil” and not suffer over it. What she wants and what she tells Macon again and again, in so many indirect ways, is for him to affirm her feeling function, to bring her back to the personal, specific people they know—friends and relatives—who are not evil. She wants him to argue her out of what her inferior thinking function is making her think and to point to the personal meaning and value in life, but Macon is a dominant thinker, and his mind just does not work this way.

Sarah accuses Macon of “showing no feeling” of being “ossified” and “encased” (p. 144). Sarah, the dominant extravert-feeler, who has not yet had need to integrate introversion, sensation or thinking, cannot even entertain that one could experience the same intensity of grief and suffering that she experiences without a great public display. This does nothing to assist Macon in integrating his unconscious feeling function. In fact, Sarah’s personal criticisms, a product of her dominant feeling function, just encourage Macon’s strong thinking function to come to his defence. Marie Louise von Franz (1971) writes that criticism does nothing to assist with inferior function integration (p. 12): “The inferior function and the sore spot are absolutely connected” (p. 15) and should be approached with “real feeling and understanding for the other person’s weakness” without “daring to touch it” (p. 15). She is not able to do this with Macon, but Muriel is.
We soon see a different Macon emerging with Muriel. When she tells him the story of her marriage and the birth of her son, he becomes emotionally engaged and begins to express a feeling response. We can see this, for example, in the following passage: “I'd be hanging over the crib watching Alexander fight for air, and Norman would call, ‘Muriel? Commercial’s just about over!’ Then next thing I knew, there was his mother standing on my doorstep saying it wasn’t his baby anyhow.”

“What? Well of all things!” Macon said (p. 177).

In another passage, Muriel describes the emotional scene of Norman’s leaving. “Good Lord,” Macon said. He felt shocked as if he’d known Norman personally (p. 178).

At the close of her story, Muriel again reveals her typological development—She expresses her former feeling function: “All the time Alexander was in the hospital seemed so awful, seemed it would go on forever....” Muriel, however, gains new consciousness by integrating more of her inferior objectivity. For example, we see her gain distance by reflecting upon her feelings: “...now when I look back, I almost miss it. I mean there was something cozy about it.” Here, distancing is also expressed in her memory: “I’d stand at a window and look out. I’d look down at the emergency room entrance and watch the ambulances coming in.” In her next statement, she makes an intuitive leap, but again it demonstrates both the objectivity with which she gained new perspectives, as well as her awareness that sometimes, in times of crisis, we must put our dominant functions to one side.

You ever wonder what a Martian might think if he happened to land near an emergency room? He’d see an ambulance whizzing in and everybody running out to meet it, tearing the doors open, grabbing up the stretcher. ... ‘[W]hat kind and helpful creatures.’ He’d never guess we’re not always that way; that we had to, oh, put aside our natural selves to do it.” (p. 179)

When Muriel finishes telling Macon her story, he “experiences a sudden twist in his chest. He felt there was something he needed to do, some kind of connection he wanted to make, and when she raised her face he bent and kissed her...” (p. 179). Muriel’s ability to distance her feeling function, to validate Macon’s dominant objective functions by demonstrating their usefulness in her own life, allows Macon to relate to her—to see not only their similarities, but human similarities. When he first tells Muriel about Ethan, he expresses his inability to access his feelings, and gives as examples his estrangement from Sarah and from all people: “I wonder if all of this has only brought out the truth about us [Sarah and him]—how far apart we are. I’m afraid we got married
because we were far apart. And now I’m far from everyone…and everyone looks trivial and foolish and not related to me” (p. 200). Although Muriel is an extravert, and this dominant attitude should have her verbally responding to Macon’s tragedy, she doesn’t speak at all, but allows him to speak. Muriel is a good listener as well as a good talker. She was brought up in a home of extraverts, and was employed as a companion for an extraverted elderly woman. She has learned that people need to be heard and that silence, on her part, is sometimes a necessity. When they go to bed together, she places his hand on her Caesarean scar: “it seemed to him …that she had as good as spoken aloud. ‘About your son,’ she seemed to be saying: ‘Just put your hand here. I’m scarred, too. We’re all scarred. You are not the only one’” (p. 201). It is Macon’s intuition, his tertiary function that allows him to imagine these words and it is these words that lead him on towards the evolution of his inferior feeling function.

Later, after he begins spending more time with Muriel and engages with the many characters who inhabit her life, Macon will reflect on the person he is when he’s with her: “This person had never been suspected of narrowness, never been accused of chilliness; in fact, was mocked for his soft heart” (p. 212). When he flies to Edmonton, instead of avoiding people as he usually does when travelling, he speaks to and comforts his phobic seatmate, Mrs. Bunn. He does so by first offering her his emergency flask of sherry and then putting his arm around her. When these efforts fail and they are undergoing a rough take off, he demonstrates his feeling evolution further by making a personal connection: “I’ve been in much worse than this,” he tells her. In days of old, before Macon met Muriel, we could well imagine him responding to Mrs. Bunn from his thinking function and telling her what statistics said about the safety of air travel, or we could imagine that his introverted attitude would just have blocked her phobic responses out or made him move to find another seat. In this situation, however, he is successfully using his less developed extraverted attitude and his inferior feeling function both. Von Franz (1971) says “[a]n introvert who wants to assimilate his inferior function must relate to outer [people and] objects” (p. 11), and we see Macon doing this increasingly as he’s brought into Muriel’s highly peopled world. Using less developed personality components initially feels false to Macon, but both his dominant thinking coupled with his secondary sensation function suggest otherwise. “He was lying now, presenting himself to Mrs. Bunn as this merry, tolerant person…. Only later, when he passed a mirror and noticed a
grin on his face, did he realize that, in fact, he might not have been lying to Mrs. Bunn after all” (Tyler, 1985, p. 298).

Before Macon moved in with Muriel, he had lived in a privileged middle-class neighbourhood in a nice house sheltered from the day-to-day struggles and solutions of the working poor. The street Muriel lives on is “worn” and “sad” (p. 283). She lives in a place “where nothing went right for anyone, where the men had dead-end jobs or none at all and the women were running to fat and the children were turning out badly” (p. 283), but in spite of all of this, Macon feels alive here. He comes to know and interact with all of Muriel’s friends and neighbours, and discovers a community. When Muriel’s sister arrives at the apartment looking for a place to stay after fighting with her mother, Macon, as he listens to her emotional story, “has a sudden view of his life as rich and full and astonishing” (p. 285). There is a “tremendous charge of emotion” connected with the processes of the inferior function (von Franz, 1971, p. 15). “In the realm of the inferior function there is a great concentration of life, so that as soon as the superior function is worn out—begins to rattle and lose oil like an old car—if people succeed in turning to their inferior function they will rediscover a new potential of life. Everything in the realm of the inferior function becomes exciting, dramatic, full of positive and negative possibilities. There is tremendous tension and the world is, as it were, rediscovered through the inferior function” (p. 15).

Although Muriel facilitates Macon’s evolution of his feeling function, their relationship is far from smooth sailing. The battles they engage in are of a different kind from those Macon and Sarah have and are usually fought in the arena of intuition and sensation. For example, when Muriel tells Macon that she has quit her job at the veterinarian’s, Macon becomes angry with her:

‘You quit the Meow-Bow?’.... He couldn’t explain the sudden weight that fell on him.

“It’s not like it really paid much,” Muriel said, “And you do buy most of the groceries now and help with the rent and all; it’s not like I needed the money” (Tyler, 1985, p. 279)

She tells Macon she quit because she would come home feeling “literally dead” (p. 279). Muriel’s constant misuse of words is a recurring problem that the precise sensate, Macon, finds irritating and tries to rectify. After trying to correct her word usage, he complains: “Jesus, Muriel, you’re so imprecise. You’re so sloppy. And how could you
quit your job like that? How could you just assume like that? You never even warned me” (p. 279).

Muriel, with the confidence of an extravert intuitive, who just knows something will turn up if she needs it, tells Macon not to “makes such a big deal of it.” In the same scene, they arrive at Muriel’s favourite second hand shop, but Macon refuses to go in with her. Using her dominant intuition, she tries to tempt him in, by donning a hand puppet mitten and having it talk to him. “Macon, please don’t be angry with Muriel ...come into this nice store with her.” Macon resists. “Mitchell Mitten” then tries to appeal to Macon’s sensation by telling him all about the incredible “gadgets” they have in the store. “There’s a silent hammer....There’s a magnifying glass all cracked and broken, and when you look at broken things through the lens you’d swear they’d turned whole again” (p. 279). Once she’s got his interest, she has the hand puppet say: “Muriel can always take care of herself....Don’t you know she could find another job tomorrow, if she wanted?” (p. 279).

Unlike Sarah, who criticizes Macon’s typology in an argument, Muriel uses her understanding of his character to win him over. Macon, however, does not so easily win Muriel over in an argument. It is usually Muriel’s dominant intuition that reads and responds to a situation before it arises, leaving Macon baffled. Muriel is eager, for example, to have a long-term commitment from Macon. Once his divorce is through, she wants him to marry her, but Macon vacillates because, still a dominant thinker, he is not sure what his true feelings are for her. In one scene, Macon mentions that he thinks her son should be attending a private school. Muriel asks him if he is going to marry her and make a commitment to be there to put her son through ten years of school. She says: “You don’t know what you want. One minute you like me and the next minute you don’t. One minute you’re ashamed to be seen with me and the next you think I’m the best thing that ever happened to you” (p. 281).

Astonished by her intuition that has so accurately expressed what he feels, “he stared at her. He had never guessed that she read him so clearly” (p. 281). Muriel leaves Macon bewildered and unable to respond. He is always surprised by her reactions, by her extraverted intuitive reflexes, which happen so quickly and seem to move so far from the subject they’re discussing that he could never anticipate them. “But I just want him to learn to subtract” (p. 281) is all Macon feels capable of saying. It is a thinking response, but one that does not logically counter Muriel’s complaint, because intuition and thinking
are not in opposition and so cannot meet and blend in the same “push-me-pull-you” union of thinking and feeling. Instead, there is a gap in the transaction—a place that does not directly attack Macon’s inferior function, but one that demands Macon access his tertiary intuition, to question what it is, exactly, that exists here.

This kind of arguing contrasts starkly to his battles with Sarah, which are always so predictable and so seamlessly contained in the totality of their functional union. It is as if there is no room for them to discern the dynamics of their relationship—to figure out what it is they really want from each other. When he moves back in with Sarah and chooses not to speak to her about Muriel or the boyfriend Sarah had during their separation, Sarah becomes annoyed. She begins to criticize him for not readily engaging in this disclosure of feeling, and he responds, as always, with his dominant thinking function: “By God, if that doesn’t sum up everything that’s wrong with being married. ‘The trouble with you is, Macon—’ and ‘I know you better than you know yourself, Macon—’” (p. 321).

Sarah, oblivious to Macon’s response, continues with her criticism: “The trouble with you is ... you think people should stay in their own sealed packages. You don’t believe in opening up. You don’t believe in trading back and forth” (p. 321). It appears as if she hopes to change Macon’s dominant function and attitude and make him more like herself, but perhaps the unconscious dynamic here is Sarah’s attempt to pin Macon to his dominant attitude of introversion and his dominant function of thinking—to preserve the status quo—so that they both can proceed through life unchanged. Wanting “to proceed through life unchanged” is exactly what Sarah accuses Macon of wanting, and knowing how the dynamics of psychological projection work, we can easily see what an exceptional hook he makes for her projection.

Macon’s struggle is now in deciding either to become more of who he is, take on the challenge of integrating unconscious functions and evolve as a person—or, conversely, accept to live a partial life. In the end, Macon chooses the more difficult path by choosing to go back to Muriel. Her strange extraverted, intuitive, feeling ways contrast so patently with Macon’s sober introverted, sensate, thinking, yet the fact that her primary function is intuition and that Macon’s is thinking assure that there will be no seamless place of merger between them. In the collective eye, which values merging over separateness and similarity over difference, they appear unimaginable together. As Sarah
says, "[y]ou'll be one of those mismatched couples that nobody invites to parties. No one will know what to make of you.... It's grotesque... (p. 352).

Yet, Macon is not swayed by Sarah's warnings: "That's probably true," he begins in dominant thinking mode, but then is aware of "a mild stirring of interest" which he follows to an insight (p. 334). Significantly, his insight has to do with the "feeling" issues of the psychological growth of couples and comes to him by way of his tertiary intuition: "he saw now how such couples evolved. They were not, as he always supposed, the result of some ludicrous lack of perception, but had come together for reasons that the rest of the world would never guess" (p. 334). This insight demonstrates the marked perceptual shift and new consciousness Macon has made by stretching his less developed and inferior functions. While not forgoing his dominant functions, he has moved from a one-sided detached objective understanding of relationships to a place that also makes room for personal experience and subjectivity.

The process of individuation, which includes the joys and struggles of attempting to integrate inferior functions, is an ongoing, life-long process that is never complete. As von Franz writes: "Every time one feels he has acquired a certain inner balance, a firm standpoint, something happens from within or without to throw it over again. This force always comes through the fourth door, which cannot be shut. The other three doors of the inner room can be closed. But on the fourth door the lock does not work, and there, when one is least prepared for it, the unexpected will come in again" (p. 67). Student writers should never be at a loss for material. They should gain confidence in realizing that all characters contain stories and that Jung's typology, as well as its post-Jungian evolutions, can be useful in unearthing these.

Typology at Work in Life and Fiction

It has been my finding as a writer that my characters generally appear in my mind's eye and behave with an authenticity and life of their own that satisfies me; occasionally, however, I have found myself at the end of a metaphoric cliff with a character, uncertain of how he or she will respond in a given situation. At these times, I carefully consider the character's typology. Are they extraverts or introverts? What is their primary function? What is their secondary function? How might their inferior function cause them trouble?
Often, in my work, I have found that my main characters share my typological preferences, but usually to an extreme and/or dysfunctional degree. They are frequently introverted intuitive feelers. But they have not experienced the natural development and partial integration of unconscious attitudes and functions. As a natural introvert, my propensity is to solitude. For practical reasons, however, I have learned how to access my less conscious and undeveloped extraversion and be relatively comfortable around people. An introverted character who has not developed even an inferior kind of extraversion will find dealing with an external world debilitating. By the same token, an intuitive, like me, may experience the world through a resonance of unconscious and subjective perceptions, but unless psychotic, he or she will have some consciousness of the objective world of the senses, where a chair is only a chair and a lamp shade is only lamp shade. Characters I have worked with, such as Mama Cassava, in “The Overseer,” and Madonna Rosa, in “Madonna Rosa” (see Chapter Six for these stories) are overwhelmed by their one-sided intuitive functions. The reality of these characters is overpowered by the subjective and the symbolic. In both of these stories, the conflicts arise through tensions that exist between the extreme intuition of an individual and a world of sensation that cannot value intuition because it cannot bridge the gap necessary in order to understand it.

While I would never suggest that it was imperative for student writers to definitively come to an understanding of the psychological dynamics out of which they write, I believe that an ongoing analysis of one’s work can yield great creative benefits. Knowing one’s own typology, for example, and comparing and contrasting that with the characters who inhabit one’s work can give a student writer insight and consciousness into their most profound struggles. For example, in analysing my own work, I’ve discovered how my writing shows that I find the intuitive function marginalized, the feeling function devalued, and the attitude of introversion aberrant in the world. When I wrote these stories I mention, I was not conscious of having this perception—but in discovering it, I have been better able to explore it.

Typology and Writing

Jung’s concept of typology assists student writers with plots and characters. Besides this, however, it can assist students and teachers in understanding the various ways a specific writer prefers to write, as well as a variety of ways a writing project can be
approached. In his work *People Types and Tiger Stripes*, Gordon Lawrence (1979) writes: “The fact that a student prefers sensing perception over intuitive perception, or prefers an active (extraverted) approach to studies over a reflective (introverted) one, is not just an interesting curiosity. [It] is crucial in explaining why certain instruction works with some students and not with others” (p. 5).

Ann B. Loomis (1999) suggests that there are typological preferences for ways students approach the task of writing and that trying to write in ways that are not natural to our typology can leave us feeling discouraged about writing in general (p. 2). In her book *Write from the Start*, she uses the Myers-Briggs classifications to present profiles of the different types of writer. Extrapolating from what Loomis, Lawrence, and others have written regarding typology and learning, we can outline the following general preferences for writers of each attitude and function type:

Extraverted writers enjoy more collaborative approaches to writing than do introverts. Workshop and classroom environments in which students are able to test their work on listeners, and get and give verbal feedback, are stimulating experiences for the extravert. The introvert, on the other hand, is less likely to feel comfortable participating in the verbal exchanges of classroom and workshop. Introverts find their best insights come to them when they are alone, quietly contemplating. Insights may suggest themselves in the classroom, but they find to their frustration that these tend to come long after the opportune moment to speak has passed. Extraverted writers like to talk about their projects before they begin writing, whereas introvert writers have an almost superstitious fear of sharing their projects beforehand. The extravert finds in discussing the project that he builds energy for it, while the introvert finds discussion destroys the energy that must build slowly from within. Lastly, extraverts “have a good sense of audience” (Loomis, 1999, p. 12) and find it easier to write for a real audience than the introvert. If the introvert considers an audience at all, it is likely to be a close friend or teacher whose opinion he respects.

In general, sensates prefer writing non-fiction or fact-based fiction and poetry. Precise details and language are extremely important to them. They prefer learning with some kind of a template to guide them, and are more inclined to find working on such things as plot graphs and character sketches constructive approaches to their writing. They are less likely to work with metaphors and symbols, as intuitive writers do. They prefer crisp, short sentences, have a gift for recapturing authentic dialogue, and excel at
presenting those small details that bring characters to life. Intuitives, on the other hand, are more inclined to call upon the inner world of the psyche for subject matter. Their fiction, poetry and creative non-fiction does not rely on the factual events as they unfold in the external world but rather on the psychic experience and the inner truths as they present themselves. The intuitive approach to writing is much more inclined to be one of questing and questioning than that of the sensate. While sensates like to have a firm idea about what they’re writing at the outset of a project, intuitives are content to follow language, symbols, and details as they accumulate in their mind and on the page.

Intuitives, unlike sensates, recognize that they can not be fully aware of the story they are writing until it is complete. They are more apt to entertain the bizarre and unbelievable, yet have a knack for conveying these things as “realer than real and truer than true.” They enjoy reading and writing rich sentences, full of symbolic potency as well as physical accuracy. They feel they achieve their best work not by writing with factual precision, but with writing that bridges both physical and psychic worlds and that can lead to new possibilities of perception and/or action for themselves and their readers. In a workshop or classroom situation, the sensate prefers definite and formal guidelines for assignments and conduct. They will not be happy, as the intuitive will, if the teacher gives them carte blanche on a writing project. They much prefer to be asked, for example, to write a sonnet or a personal essay, and be given a specific word-length and due date than be told that they can produce anything they’re itching to write, of any length by the end of the month. In workshop critiques, they both give and prefer precise commentary. Vague responses, such as “I’m not sure why, it just seems to me that the character doesn’t work,” only serve to frustrate them. Intuitives, on the other hand, tend to prefer this kind of comment as it allows them to work at ferreting out a problem—and usually, in the process, discover an array of psychic truths or an array of methods for fixing the problem—none of which anyone has ever thought of before.

The “feeling” writer will prefer to write about the dynamics that exist between people or about the lives of people. If intuitive feelers, they will be interested in exploring what motivates their characters; if sensate feelers, they will be interested in showing the details of their characters’ appearances and responses. The human struggle is of paramount importance to “feeling” writers, and often they write with the conscious hope of making the world a better place for people or of helping people understand one another. They also often write out of a motivation to understand themselves and their life
experiences in various social contexts. Their work is often character driven. Unlike the “thinker,” the writing of the “feeler” is personal. Feelers find it difficult or boring to write with the detachment and objectivity that is required of traditional academic writing. If they do learn to write in this “thinking” style, they usually use it as a conscious technique to bias the reader in favour of more feeling approaches. Thinkers clarify the ambiguous in their writing; they enjoy working with logical premises and demonstrating step by step how something became the way it did. They tend to prefer the linear plot line, as opposed to more post-modern approaches. They lay out their stories, their arguments and their sentences in a straightforward chronology that is easily followed. They can take the most complex abstract material and transform it through their writing into something easily understood. In the classroom and workshop, “thinkers” are not as aware of the feelings of their classmates as “feeling types” are. They can sometimes say things that they believe to be objective and true that wound others. They are very good, however, in assisting other writers in seeing the flaws in their logic. Feelers, on the other hand, are very useful in facilitating harmonious dynamics in the workshop. They will go out of their way to give support to someone who has just been through a rough critiquing session, and even when introverted, “feelers” still work for the good of the group. Feelers, however, find it difficult not to take criticism personally. Because of this, they also find it difficult to give criticism to others, because they fear others won’t know how to take it. Feelers work best if they can make personal connections in a group, with teacher and with peers. They find it impossible to work in a group that does not function harmoniously, and are extremely sensitive to classroom dynamics. Fighting and unpleasantness can make them feel physically ill. They would far rather get along with everyone than write a brilliant story or get a good mark in their class. Thinkers, on the other hand, do not require these kinds of connections to do good work. They believe in justice, and would rather see a class or a workshop levelled in this way than have one that functions harmoniously but does not seem objectively fair.

Loomis (1999) goes further. She proposes that it is useful to think of the creative writing process as analogous to building a house and argues that creative writing proceeds in a series of four stages. She puts forward the following sequence: “The Dreamer Stage”; “The Designer Stage”; “The Builder Stage”; and “The Inspector Stage.” She proposes how various functions might be implemented in each case. She encourages activities like “freewriting,” “clustering,” and “listing” in the prewriting “dreamer stage”
and proposes a variety of patterns for organization for the “designer stage,” such as chronological; general to specific; images; problem-solution; cause and effect; compare-contrast; theme emerging from material; acronyms; what, when, where, why, and how; spatial; and the speech format.

The “builder stage” is the stage in which a writer fleshes out the piece. Loomis proposes using one or more of the following for this task: definition, description, step-by-step instructions, examples, quotations, anecdotes, figurative language, and visuals.

The final stage, “the inspector stage,” is a time for “refining” one’s work. “Refining,” she explains, isn’t the same as merely revising or editing. “Even if you revise much of your work as you go along, you’ll find in the Inspector Stage that you need to refine your piece even further” (p. 95). For Loomis, “refining” is making one’s work sound “smooth and polished” (p. 95): considering the paragraphs, sentences and words in the piece and proofreading effectively.

Loomis’ schema, however, while undoubtedly useful, surely applies to traditional academic composition rather than to creative writing. The traditional academic composition is more a creation of ego than of unconscious. Each stage of Loomis’ schema favours predominant functions, and in offering the options she does, she is attempting to meet as many different preferences, in each stage, as she can. What is clear from Loomis’ work is that writing is a task that requires every function to a greater or lesser extent. What is not clear from her work is that there is writing itself which is markedly different from other kinds of writing.

I would argue that traditional academic composition is far more conducive to the functions of sensation and thinking than is creative writing. The objective approach of the dominant sensation and thinking functions create a subjective shadow. In traditional approaches to writing, it is acceptable for the ego to dip into the unconscious in the initial stages, to dredge up things that will inspire an essay or ultimately support an already determined ego position, but after this primary interaction, the unconscious is less likely to be helpful to the ego’s goals. The ego believes itself to be objective in its creative task, but in fact, confined by its own subjective desires and consciousness, seizes control and behaves in a far less objective manner than the functionally subjective ego.

Creative writing (fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction, for example) is functionally intuitive and feeling. Both the intuitive and feeling functions are subjective, and these create an objective shadow. In creative writing, the subjective ego demonstrates
its greater objectivity by the position it takes up as scribe and/or secretary of the unconscious. Whereas the ego determines its subjective course and goal, through objective functions in traditional forms of academic writing, the ego, in approaches to creative writing, opens itself objectively to the unconscious, using subjective functions. Lumping all types of writing together, as Loomis does, and determining linear stages that apply to all writing tasks, may be helpful in providing understanding to students and teachers about the typological complexity of the writing process, but it is not discerning enough to be of real assistance to the creative writing student. Loomis shows a sensation-thinking bias in her schema, which may be her own typological approach to writing, but one, I would argue, that is not the natural preference of the creative writer. In the sixteen profiles Loomis outlines, there are only two which truly express the creative writer: the INFP—the introverted, intuitive, feeling, perceptive—and the INFJ—the introverted, intuitive, feeling, judging.

She writes that “INFPs are imaginative writers who gravitate towards poetry, metaphorical and alliterative language, and passionately persuasive prose. Because they are drawn to images, their descriptions may be quite vivid.” They present detail “in scenes that capture the ambiance of an experience or a situation....” And the INFJ “are often fine novelists, but they can also write profound non-fiction” (p. 21). Of all the types, the INFJs, according to Loomis, “are most likely to be published authors” (p. 21). The majority of the other types, dominated by sensation or thinking, prefer less creative forms of written expression. The Extraverted “NFs” find journalistic writing more natural than creative writing, as they have a need to interact with the external world. Jane Piirto (2004) mentions a study where The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator was administered to a group of writers. “Writers tested with the Myers-Briggs were found overwhelmingly to be introverted, intuitive, feeling and perceptive—INFP,” she writes. Individuals with these preferences “show inner strength, especially with regard to their personal values, and are reserved. They look for a type of job that provides satisfaction rather than money, where they can be perfectionists about their work. They are interested in ideas” (p. 199).

It should be stressed, however, that although Creative Writing comes most naturally to the introverted, intuitive, feeling type, this by no means excludes other individuals with varying typologies who bring their own particular strengths to the task of Creative Writing. What we can surmise from the fact that introverted, intuitive, feelers are more naturally inclined to produce Creative Writing is that these functions and this
attitude are important to creative writing; that if they are unconscious or weak in an aspiring creative writer, they can be developed—and if they are developed, they can be further strengthened. We can also surmise that if it is true that introverted, intuitive, feelers find creative writing more natural, then they are also more likely to pursue creative writing as a hobby or career. Research on the typological preferences of students who attend academic and continuing education creative writing programs and workshops would be essential in confirming functional and attitudinal biases. Such information could then be used to establish one’s teaching approach. If introverted, intuitive, and feeling preferences incline one to creative forms of writing, as the work of Loomis suggests, and if such individuals are more inclined to enter educational environments to pursue these writing interests, this could have a great impact on teaching methods in this subject area.

Lawrence’s (1979) statistics show that in the general population extraverts outnumber introverts by about 3 to 1. Sensing types outnumber intuitive types by approximately the same number and there is a higher ratio of women “feelers”—approximately 60 percent of the population, according to Lawrence. Statistics on the typological preferences of teachers are in line with this for the most part. Lawrence’s statistics show the majority of teachers (elementary through secondary) demonstrate an extraverted, sensation, feeling preference, while the majority of college instructors and university professors demonstrate an introverted, intuitive, thinking preference (p. 21). If teachers impose their own preferences on students, which both Loomis and Lawrence suggest is the case, then students of a typology that is naturally predisposed to Creative Writing are not, in the majority of instances, finding their propensities nurtured anywhere along the formal educational spectrum.

What would an ideal learning environment for Creative Writing look like if based on typology? Would it consist of workshops with their implicit extraverted character? Would it have its sensation thinking technique focus? These are questions beyond the scope and study of this thesis, but ones both student writers and teachers may benefit from pondering. It may be helpful to reflect on our position towards the various attitudes and functions, locate them, if possible, in masculine and feminine archetypal patterns, and then place them on a scale of our collective values. Do the introverted, intuitive, feelers fall through the educational cracks? Are these attitudes and these functions
archetypally feminine? Are these attitudes and functions a place where we can search further for the missing voice of the voiceless feminine?

So far, we have looked at how an understanding of Jung’s typology and its post-Jungian evolutions can assist the student writer in revealing psychologically authentic plots and characters. We have considered how student writers may better understand their own writing preferences and work to integrate and strengthen necessary functions by understanding their typologies. In the last section of this chapter, we will consider functions as they reveal themselves in literary works. Here, again, the student writer will benefit by discerning the various functions as they manifest in their own writing and how they might integrate and strengthen those that seem weak or absent in their work. In creative writing, we can identify four prominent components. These include detail, description, narration, and dialogue, and each of these can be linked to a specific typological function. Students need to be encouraged to develop the functions that will allow them to master these four components. It might, for example, be useful to direct the student to the following example of detail from Thomas Hardy’s (1974) novel Jude the Obscure as representing the developed sensation function:

Not a soul was visible on the hedgeless highway, or on either side of it, and the white road seemed to ascend and diminish till it joined the sky. At the very top it was crossed at right angles by a green ‘ridge-way’—the Icknield Street and original Roman road through the district. The ancient track ran east and west for many miles, and down almost to within living memory had been used for driving flocks and herds to fairs and markets. But it was now neglected and overgrown. (p. 39)

Students will note that this passage appeals to the specific sense of sight. They could then be directed to Anita Diamant’s novel The Red Tent (1997)—a novel that is typologically sensation dominant. Here they will discover a work in which our ears, eyes, and noses are engaged:

While Kemuel snored, the men returned, bringing the flocks into the near pasture just over the rise from the tents, so the final hours of our preparation were filled with bleating, dust, and animal smells. They were filled too with the unaccustomed noise and tension of so many men in our midst. (p. 100)

Detail is the jurisdiction of the sensation function, and works as a creative writing component to bring the reader physically into a work, to physically orient or disorient him, to make him experience characters, settings, and events in a tactile way. Description differs from detail markedly in that it does not evoke the five senses, but rather the sixth,
or what we more commonly refer to as the imagination. The following is an illustration from John Banville’s (2001) description-laden work, *Eclipse*:

I could see the scene, the morning light like heavy pale gas and Lydia standing in the living room of the big old dark house by the sea that had been part of her inheritance from her father, with the receiver wedged between shoulder and jaw, a trick that I have never been able to master, talking sideways into it as if it were a sleepy infant cradled beside her face. There is a briny smell of the sea, the far cry of gulls. It all seemed so clear and yet so far away it might have been a vision of life on another planet, unimaginably distant from this one, yet similar in every detail. (p. 39)

With description, the student will discover that imagination is engaged by resonant images. For example, above, light is presented as pale heavy gas, the telephone receiver becomes a sleepy infant, and the scene itself becomes transported to another planet. Description presents us with detail that cannot be experienced only through the senses—for although description can be sensual, there is always some other dimension to it, something that often is in conflict with the physical simplicity, and something that points to a level of meaning which has not yet been brought entirely to awareness. The following is an example of description from Vladimir Nabokov’s (1955) work *Lolita*:

The elms and the poplars were turning their ruffled backs to a sudden onslaught of wind, and a black thunderhead loomed above Ramsdale’s white church tower when I looked around me for the last time. For unknown adventures I was leaving the livid house where I had rented a room only ten weeks before. (p. 96)

In this pregnant passage, even the simple inclusion of the adjective “livid” points beyond what we can experience with our physical senses, and connects us to a tension that cannot be articulated through words. The component of description is linked to the intuitive function and works to engage the intuitive function of the reader.

Narration, while it can exist in passages where detail and description also are present, differs from these two components in the fact that it is the sequential building block that can move a work logically from one point to the next. Consider, for example, this small passage of narration in Tolstoy’s (1982) *War and Peace*:

On August the 24th Davydov’s first partisan detachment was formed, and others soon followed. As the campaign proceeded so more and more of these detachments were organized. (p. 1225)

Here, the information we are given is pertinent, though not focal. The logic of narration fills in gaps and allows the reader to sweep smoothly over the morass of
potential red-herring complexities. It carries us through time, space, and character, and ensures we do not lose our logical bearings or get sidetracked into chaos. The following is a passage of narration from Mary Lawson’s (2003) Crow Lake:

Not long ago I attended a conference in Edmonton to give a paper on the effect of pesticides on the life of still-water ponds. It wasn’t a particularly brilliant conference but on the way back we flew very low over northern Ontario, and that in itself made the trip worthwhile. (p. 93)

The narrator makes short work of the conference, since its only importance to the story was the flight back it provided. If the narrator had chosen to go off into a digression about the conference, and all the people she had met there, and the food they had served, and the room she slept in, and the conversations she engaged in, the reader would be bewildered by the sudden movement away from the story’s trajectory. It is narration that provides the story’s through line, its melody, or its beat. Like the thinking function, to which it is linked, narration is linear. This is even true of postmodern works, where narration is intentionally fragmented in order to produce a particular effect.

The fourth component in creative writing is dialogue, and as an exchange between people, it is linked to the feeling function. The following is an example of dialogue taken from Rohinton Mistry’s (1995) novel A Fine Balance:

“Very tasty,” said Ishvar, and Om nodded agreement with his mouth full. “You eat bread every day?”
“Yes,” said Diana. “Don’t you like it?”
“Oh, it’s very good,” said Ishvar. “No, I was just thinking, must be expensive to buy ready-made bread every day. You don’t get wheat on your ration card?”
“It’s available. But taking it to the mill for grinding, mixing flour, making chapati—that’s too much for me to do. I used to when my husband was alive. Afterwards, I didn’t care. Nothing worse than cooking for just one.” She broke a piece of her loaf to soak up some gravy. “Must be expensive for you also, eating at Vishram. (p. 462)

In dialogue, the student will note that characters express their individuality by the things they say and do not say about themselves, as well as by the idiosyncratic ways that they speak. They express their motivations and also establish their connections and relationships to other characters in unstated ways. In the above example, Ishvar and Om, two impoverished tailors, are breaking bread for the first time with their employer, Diana. Ishvar’s thoughts move to the material world, where they are engaged with survival issues, while Diana’s thoughts move to the emotional world and the past, where she is
fixated. The exchange shows a growing friendship developing between characters who previously related to one another only through the confines of the hierarchical relationship of employer and employee. Ishvar’s query about expense demonstrates a human and equal connection being forged between himself and his employer. Diana’s confessional response further breaks down the employer/employee hierarchical structure by placing her in a more human context in the eyes of her workers.

In this context students might usefully be directed to Deborah Tannen’s (1990) work *You Just Don’t Understand* where she explores the differences between masculine and feminine conversation styles. She suggests that conversations are, in fact, negotiations and that the masculine mode of conversation has to do with getting “the upper hand … and protect[ing] [oneself] from others’ attempts to put [one] down” (p. 25). The feminine approach, on the other hand, is establishing “a network of connections….Conversations are negotiations for closeness in which people try to seek and give confirmation and support, and to reach consensus. They try to protect themselves from others’ attempts to push them away” (p. 25). In both cases, the feeling function and its establishing of relationship, hierarchical or co-operative, is constellated through conversation. In the masculine style, according to Tannen, it manifests in a subjective and personal way, as one attempts to use one’s uniqueness and individual position to assert oneself as the dominant in a relationship. In the feminine style, it manifests in an objective way, as one works to dissolve the boundaries of human differences and establish inclusivity.

In the following dialogue about marriage between the sisters Gudrun and Ursula, in D.H. Lawrence’s (1950) *Women in Love*, the hierarchy that is sustained initially dissolves into consensus:

“You wouldn’t consider a good offer?” asked Gudrun.
“I think I’ve rejected several,” said Ursula.
“Really!” Gudrun flushed dark—“But anything really worth while? Have you really?”
“A thousand a year, and an awfully nice man. I liked him awfully,” said Ursula.
“Really! But weren’t you fearfully tempted?”
“In the abstract but not in the concrete,” said Ursula. “When it comes to the point, one isn’t even tempted—oh, if I were tempted I’d marry like a shot. I’m only tempted not to.” The faces of both sisters suddenly lit up with amusement.
“Isn’t it an amazing thing,” cried Gudrun, “how strong the temptation is, not to!” (pp. 1-2)
The dialogue occurs in the first two pages of the work and in unstated ways establishes the relationship that exists between the two women. Ursula gains the upper hand as the more experienced sister, while Gudrun’s inquisition sets her up as the sister eager to experience the world vicariously. There is an almost student/mentor quality to the relationship as it is expressed in this dialogue. At the end of the conversation, however, after the two sisters have met in laughter, Gudrun asserts her own insight, which allows her to appear as the equal of her sister in experience.

Students should be aware that dialogue can contain detail, description, narration, and even dialogue depending on the characters’ typological preferences. An intuitive character may speak more descriptively than a sensate, and a sensate may speak about details which engage the senses; a thinker may narrate in a logical, sequential prose. A feeler might recount what others have said to him or her. For the student writer, being aware of typological preferences can greatly assist, not so much in the creation of authenticity, as in its testing. I make this distinction because I am of the opinion that if we are able to open ourselves to the unconscious, our ego has no need to create—only to record. Still, we must forever be conscious of the danger of the intrusive ego. We must learn to test the work against what we know of human nature and repair the damage our sometimes overzealous egos do.

Student writers might be encouraged to examine their work to see what components they use the most and which they need to develop. It has been my finding through my years of teaching creative writing that adult education students who are just starting to explore their interests in writing either begin with one strong component preference—or, if not consciously preferred, one which they handle with more sophistication than the others. Usually, either dialogue or narration is the initial strong component. Gradually, a second component will develop, and then sometimes, over the course of a year, a third component will come in to play—though it is usually not as strong at the first two. Rarely have I worked with a student long enough to see a fourth component develop, but I assume that integrating a fourth component is akin to integrating one’s inferior function, and most probably can never be wholly done.

Students might also wish to consider the typological functions as linked to narrative points of view. A first-person point of view, even when presented by a thinking narrator, would express more of the feeling function, in its implicit attempt to seek connection and identification with the reader. A second-person point of view, not often
used, is connected to the intuitive function. In the second person, the narrator gets into "your" head and tells "you" what you are thinking and doing. The physical boundaries of the narrator do not exist, while the psyche of the narrator is projected into another's consciousness. The omniscient point of view, distanced and objective, is linked to the thinking function. The omniscient narrator makes no judgements about the characters he or she reports upon. The third-person limited point of view moves in and out of the consciousness of one character, seeing and feeling what only this one character sees and feels. Unlike the thinking omniscient point of view, it does not attend to all of the characters equally. Its objective discernment and its consistency of conscripted characters link it to the sensation function.

In his work *Tools of Critical Thinking: Metathoughts for Psychology*, social psychologist David A. Levy (1997) discusses concepts that can further assist us in understanding typological function in relation to writing. For example, he makes a distinction between words that are used to describe and words that are used to evaluate. "Typically," he writes, we have come to see the first type as objective while the second type we consider subjective (p. 3). Functionally, we might consider characters who use words simply to describe, as thinkers, while feelers may be more inclined to use words that evaluate. Interestingly, the point of Levy's chapter on this topic is to draw attention to the evaluative bias in language. "Whenever we attempt to describe something or someone, the words we use are almost invariably value laden, in that they reflect our own personal likes and dislikes. Thus, our use of any particular term serves not only to describe, but also to prescribe what is desirable or undesirable to us" (p. 3). Whereas the thinker is likely to be troubled by this observation, the feeler is more apt to have believed it from the beginning. For the student writer who wishes to test the authenticity of his character's thoughts and dialogue according to attitude and function, Levy's conclusions provide direction. A character's functions will influence his preferences for language. Thinkers may naturally be inclined to use language that has less direct evaluative qualities than feelers. For example, the feeling teacher may say of one of his charges, "she's a good student," directly stating his evaluation through the word "good." The thinking teacher, on the other hand, may say, "she's a diligent student," believing the word "diligent" to be an objective adjective arising from the observable evidence of the student's performance. It is through the subjective interpretation of the observable evidence, however, that the evaluative bias demonstrates itself. Another teacher,
observing the same evidence, could easily assign the adjective “plodding” to the student’s performance.

Levy also furnishes direction in his discussion on Event Theories and Construct Theories. “Event Theories provide explanations that lend themselves to direct measurement. Thus, given the proper circumstances an Event Theory can be verified or proven” and become a fact (p. 10). He gives some examples of the variety of questions Event Theories attempt to answer: “‘Why does my car stall at stoplights?’ ‘What happened to the money in my desk drawer?’ ‘How did the patient acquire an infection?’” All of these questions deal with the physical concrete world, the world which the dominant sensate most prefers.

Construct Theories, on the other hand, deal with the abstract world and can not be measured or proven. “This is because the explanations are, in themselves, intangible abstractions” (p. 10). For example, “[a]n apple falling from a tree to the ground can be seen directly; ‘gravitation,’ however, cannot. Similarly, behavior can be directly measured; but ‘motivation,’ ‘personality,’ or ‘psychopathology’ cannot” (p. 10). We can not prove or disprove the existence of an unconscious, yet it is an extremely useful concept, which can assist us in all kinds of fruitful ways. Construct Theories, then, are not the jurisdiction of the world of the physical senses, but rather the jurisdiction of the unseen world, the world which the dominant intuitive favours.

Levy tells us that each type of theory requires a different method of evaluation. Event Theories should be evaluated on the basis of their accuracy while Construct Theories should be evaluated on the basis of their usefulness. Here again the evaluation methods for each theory favour a different functional type. Conflicts can and do arise between characters often when their dominant functional methods of proposing and evaluating are at odds.
Dreams
Chapter Five

Dreams play a central role in Jungian psychology. Jungian analysts work to assist analysands in enlarging ego consciousness by encouraging interaction with the unconscious. One of the methods used to this end is to have analysands record, reflect upon, and engage with their dreams. This chapter will demonstrate how “dream work” of this kind can assist in the teaching and learning of Creative Writing.

Dreams can be (and have been) the natural and fertile source of story production for many creative writers. Such contemporary writers as William Styron, Clive Barker, and Isabel Allende acknowledge their dreams as a source of their fiction (Epel, 1995). Robert Louis Stevenson is reputed to have dreamed *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in its entirety and then “wrote [the story] almost verbatim as he dreamed it” (Mahoney, 1966, p. 8).

For the practitioner of analytical psychology and the writer alike, the dream can be a starting point in creative exploration, since it arises from the unconsciousness, and with the rare exception of lucid dreams, the “I” that I am knows it can not control my dreams. Consequently, the environment is right for ego consciousness to take a different attitude towards dream content, an attitude one may categorize as expectant rather than conclusive, one that is more readily able to engage in the mystery of the uncontrollable and the unknown. The dream, particularly when conceptualized in a Jungian context, is also well suited to serve the creative writer in that the language of dreams is similar to the language of art. For Jung, “the dream was metaphorical, speaking two tongues at once, or, as he put this hermetic duplicity, the dream is a symbol, a throwing together of two dissonants into a unique voice” (Hillman, 1983, p. 35). It “reveals the unconscious in the form of image, metaphor and symbol….Like plays, poems and paintings, the language of dreams conveys the power and subtlety of feeling as well as rational thought” (Boa & von Franz, 1988, p. 24). Jung’s understanding and approach to dreams is expansive rather than reductive and, as Hillman (1983) points out, denotes a major conceptual difference between Jungian and Freudian positions on unconscious content. Freud, Hillman explains, saw the dream as an allegory. “Allegory and metaphor both start off saying one thing as if it were another. But where the allegorical method divides this double talk into two constituents—latent and manifest—and requires *translation* of manifest into latent,
the metaphorical method keeps the two voices together, hearing the dream as it tells itself, ambiguously evocative and concretely precise at each and every instant” (p. 35).

Also, in Jungian psychology, the practice of dream analysis is carried out with a technique that could well be applied to conventional story construction. Marie Louise von Franz (1988) observes that the analyst “compares the dream to a drama” considering it under the three structural headings: “[First,] introduction or exposition—the setting of the dream and the naming of the problem; second, the peripeteia—the ups and downs of the story; and finally, the lysis—the end solution, or, perhaps catastrophe” (Boa & von Franz, 1988 p. 43). In short, the dream is a particularly good vehicle for creative writers to consider in the construction of their work, and can be used in a number of ways by creative writing teachers to assist students in discovering less ego-driven approaches to writing.

For many years, I have worked with my own dreams as a catalyst for my writing. Dreams inspire the stories and poems I write with an abundance of plot, characters, and symbols. They are the stories the unconscious tells, rife with meaning and metaphor. In fact, discovering the stories and poems of my dreams has been a way for me to explore inner landscapes, which are not bound by waking experience. Dreams have allowed me, as a teacher of creative writing, to assist others in redefining that old adage: “Write what you know.” Most of us have never murdered in real life, none of us has ever died or flown by flapping our arms, or walked on water, or had every tooth in our mouth drop out all at the same time, yet in dreams these things happen and what we feel about the experiences are authentic responses, as true as if they actually physically occurred to us. As a unique map of the psyche, my dreams have shown me aspects of unacknowledged parts of my self as they struggle to be known and to evolve and be integrated into my consciousness. They illuminate my states of mind, my moods, my elation and sadness. They tell me when turning points have arrived, and when periods of incubation are occurring. They show me what is really important to me, what path or course of action I need to follow, who I am.

The holy text, the Upanishads, is not alone in describing dreaming as a higher state of consciousness than the waking state. Historically, dreams have always connected people and cultures with a consciousness that they perceive as more knowing than their own. The ancient Egyptians, for example, viewed dreams as messages from the gods.
A person who was suffering a life crisis or simply needed a solution to a problem might seek aid from his or her dreams.

Obviously this sort of aid was greatly to be desired, but for a man to have a dream worth remembering required special incubation practices and the help of priests devoted to invoking and interpreting these dreams. In Egypt these men were called Masters of the Secret Things,” or ‘Scribes of the Double House.’ These procedures for dream procuring was relatively simple. A sick or disturbed person would sleep in the temple, after swallowing a potion to foster dreaming. Afterwards the priest would interpret the dream and administer any cure prescribed by the dream. (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1979, p. 35)

The ancient Greeks, too, saw dreams as divine messages, which allowed them to commune with the gods. Like the Egyptians, the Greeks also practiced dream incubation in temples. Their temples were dedicated to the healer Aesculapius. Diseased and ailing people would come to these temples to be cured through their dreams (p. 38). Many North American native Indian tribes also viewed dreams as important sources of information. Marie Louise von Franz (1988) in The Way of the Dream speaks about the Iroquois:

The tribe relied greatly on their dreams and [believed] that their visions and dreams were of primary interest. During the time they were in difficulties fighting the whites, they especially tried to have dreams and to follow them. Some of their prophets even foresaw the disaster of their community in dreams. They also tried to prove the reality of their spiritual experience by telling their dreams to the white missionaries who were trying to destroy their faith by labeling it as superstition. (p. 108)

Dreams can take us to far reaching spheres in our writing, and examining and amplifying their content can give us the sense of a world web, connected at every spiral and strand to the past, the present, and the future, to a history we are making and one that we share. Dreams can connect us to our planet and our universe, by taking us out of the everyday known, and propelling us into surprising landscapes.

To demonstrate a dream method of story production, I have selected a dream from my own recollections, which I call “The Head Maiden and the Lost God.” The reason I have chosen this one is similar to the reason for selecting any subject or image to write about: it is important to me, as a writer, that a subject, image, or dream has a certain integrity—one that shows itself by its staying power. If I can not hold a subject, image, or a dream in my consciousness with interest over an extended period of time, then I know the creative energy required to develop a story from it is also lacking. In analytical
psychological practice, it might be suggested that such staying power is born from a necessity for consciousness. The dreams we recall most vividly and immediately are dreams that are, in some way, relevant to the dreamer’s “here and now” in spite of when they were dreamed. “The dream...is seen as a natural, regulatory psychic process, analogous to compensatory mechanisms or bodily functioning. The conscious awareness by which the ego guides itself is inevitably only a partial view, for much remains always outside the sphere of the ego” (Hall, 1983, p. 23).

A dream can compensate for an overly one-sided ego position, showing the dreamers things to which they are blind in the waking world. It can act as a direct instructional message to the ego, urging the ego to change its conscious position, or the dream can be seen as compensating by transforming the ego’s structure in some way (Hall, 1983, p. 23). Considering the dream as compensatory is useful for the writer, in that the tensions and conflicts it immediately sets evoke an attitude of inquiry: What does the dream want me to see? What is the dream trying to tell me? What aspect of myself has been transformed in this dream? The unknown, unspoken, or unseen lures the writer into a quest of understanding, a communication that is both personal and impersonal, a communion of immediacy and engagement.

Below, is the transcription of my dream as I recalled it upon waking. I have titled the dream, as I do with all my dreams, to assist me in placing and identifying it in the growing body of dreams I record.

Head Maiden and the Lost God

There was this South Sea Island tribe who had lost their god. They were sending all of the community out into the water to swim to a boat and find him. In the dream, there was a thought that when this god was uncovered, we would also know who he was and his symbolic significance—there was a symbols dictionary of sorts that would help. The community/tribe was going to search for this god, but not all members were capable of swimming well. One of the community members was a woman head. That was all she was: a beautiful head—no body—but still she had to try to swim to find the god. It seemed for sure she would die. She knew this too, but also believed if she died she would be reincarnated as something more than a head—and, in fact, as the consort or wife of the god because her sacrifice for the love of him would be so great. So she and all the others
went swimming, and she was actually doing ok—propelling herself with her head—but she couldn’t turn. She wanted to turn left and the current pulled right. Later at the autopsy, they said you could see these particular kinds of marks on her flesh as she used superhuman strength to try to pull herself in the direction she wanted to go.

The dream of the Head Maiden is still striking to me in that it is so foreign to my consciousness and also because it seems to be such a complete story in itself. As I worked with the dream anew, I was struck by the word “sacrifice.” I considered the word, and thought about sacrifice as the act of making something sacred. As often happens with dreams, when one begins to work with them, other dreams naturally come that amplify the originals in some way. The evening I finished contemplating the Head Maiden dream, I had the following dream:

Sacrifice

The world was going to end. The United States government was looking for a way to circumvent this fate. They found a Hawaiian man who was willing to sacrifice his right hand to save the world. It was important the man was Hawaiian because he was not the stereotypical American that other nations despise. I liked this man and wanted to help him. I walked with him to a bridge where he had to lower himself through a missing bridge slat. Under the bridge was a creature...half man/half clam, who had an alligator who would take the Hawaiian man’s right hand. The Hawaiian man knew exactly what he was supposed to do. He was supposed to reach into the alligator’s mouth with both hands. His left hand would grab a bag of coins or jewels and his right hand would be sacrificed. I was with the man when this happened. It was very dark, but I saw the blood as he saw it, in his head, suddenly as the alligator bit his hand off and the blood surged. The man passed out and sank down into the depths of the ocean. I followed him. At the very bottom of the ocean was the place of sacrifices. All kinds of sacrifices were there. Everything was animated and cartoon-like. I saw Head Maiden. She was chatting animatedly but seemed very disturbed—traumatized. She said, “They wrote graffiti all over my body!” There were also singing fish and other friendly and talkative exotic creatures of the deep. Although the man was unconscious, I knew that he enjoyed being here. He wanted to stay. I realized his staying would mean death to him, and so I dragged him back up through the water, and brought him back into the world.
I took him to the first house I found. A cocktail party was in progress. The people at the party were celebrating the restoration of the world, although they had forgotten completely about the man and his sacrifice. The man sat on a couch alone and ignored by everyone. I thought now that he had lost his hand he would never be able to have a normal life and no one would ever love him. It seemed to me if this cocktail party represented the world he had saved, it would have been better if he hadn’t saved it.

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In analytical psychological practice, the recording of dreams is a method of capturing and retrieving raw unconscious content. The waking ego is then employed to sift through and amplify this raw data, bringing autobiographical elements to bear upon it—what, for example, in the individual’s life is occurring that this dream may be addressing, commenting upon, responding or reacting to?

For the writer and writing instructor, such inquiry can serve as a method to enhance and deepen the dimensions of the personal journal. In my own experience of tending a daily journal, I have discovered that locating a source of reflection just beyond the container of daily external events produces a richer, more varied and more stimulating writing experience. All too often, especially when the journal is used as a tool to promote writing in the classroom and focuses solely on external daily events, students dissociate from the rich detail their emotional connections can supply. The journal entry may become a series of place names and times. What, in these cases, is missing is the dialogue between the external and the internal, the known and the unknown, the stated and the silent, the inherent tension of two.

When working with one’s dreams in analytical psychological practice, one also is encouraged to amplify them through other sources, through actively seeking out historical and cultural motifs, patterns, and stories that seem in some way connected to the dream as I demonstrated earlier in Chapter Two, and will display again, with images, in the following chapter. Amplification is a worthwhile pre-writing activity as it can facilitate a broad cross-disciplinary approach to learning through which students can be engaged in a personal pursuit in many different and varied subject areas. In the case of this dream, I began searching for mythological motifs in which arms and hands had been sacrificed. One of the most interesting and complete that I discovered was the myth of the Norse warrior god Tyr who sacrificed his right hand to the Fenris Wolf in order to save Odin.
In analytical psychological practice, dreams are considered both individually and in series. In series, the progression of dream motifs, themes, characters and images are followed as one might follow these in the progression of chapters in a novel. In the instance of the two dreams of Head Maiden I have related, the second, in some ways, appears to answer the first. The lost god is found. He sacrifices his right hand to save the world. Yet, the second dream also presents an array of new possibilities for further inquiry. For example, in this second dream, I am particularly caught by Head Maiden’s trauma, and her assertion, “They wrote graffiti all over my body!” The discovery of her trauma and the absence of her story ignites my curiosity and immediately my mind begins generating questions. Who are “they”? Where is her graffiti-scarred body? What kinds of graffiti were written on her body and why? These kinds of spontaneous questions in themselves produce an engagement between the writer’s ego and unconscious in which the ego’s conventional position of assertion surrenders itself to the larger field of the unconscious. As the writer’s ego position shifts from asserter to investigator, the embryonic story, infused with the dynamic energy of discovery, moves beyond the bounds of what is simply known to the writer.

In analytical psychological practice, the characters who inhabit a dream are assigned the specific classifications outlined in Chapter Three. For example, the “I” in my dream is the “dream ego.” This character in a dream generally expresses my personal conscious position, which is not necessarily the most informed or correct position, but which the waking “I” will usually have the most sympathy for. The “shadow” in a dream is represented by same sex characters and suggests attitudes and aptitudes that hover just below consciousness while the animus and anima are contra-sexual characters whose symbolic significance is less accessible. In the “Head Maiden and the Lost God,” no dream ego was present. In “Sacrifice,” the dream ego is very present and active, and makes a dire and cynical judgement at the end of the dream. “If the cocktail party represents the world, is it really worth saving?” Other characters in the dream have other significance. According to classical analytical psychological practice, female characters who appear in the dream of a female dreamer are considered shadow aspects of the dreamer (Hall, 1983, p. 121); that is, they represent unconscious aspects of the dreamer—for example, attitudes, opinions, desires, of the dreamer, which although perhaps close to consciousness have not yet been consciously acknowledged.
Male characters who appear in the dreams of female dreamers are considered animus figures, while the female characters in a man’s dreams are anima figures (p. 120). Carl Jung’s own initial conceptions of anima and animus have undergone a great deal of revision and re-invention by Post-Jungians, some of which has already been addressed in greater detail in previous chapters. The contra-sexual characters represent unconscious aspects of the dreamer which stand at an even greater distance than the shadow from the dreamer’s consciousness.

Such classifications can assist Creative Writers in a deepening of perspectives on the works that they are creating whether the creative work is emerging from a dream or not. For example, in preliminary inquiry, prior to the writing of any given piece, the writer might ponder on the various characters to be employed in a work and consider how these characters relate to one another in their attitudes and aspects, and how they reflect or oppose the writer’s own conscious ego position.

Much that has been written about the craft and creation of fiction stresses the importance of writers knowing their characters, and often classroom exercises include developing character sketches for characters who will be incorporated in student stories. Conventional exercises in creating such sketches may include lists of questions, such as: What kind of work does your character do? What is your character’s level of education? What are their hobbies? What does your character love? Whom do they love? How do they demonstrate it? What are your character’s weaknesses? What are their strengths? Such lists will no doubt yield significant information regarding a character; however, they do not facilitate “the authentic transfer of emotion from author to character” (Edwards, 1999, p. 47), which is seen by many practitioners and instructors of Creative Writing to be an essential component in creating believable, non-stereotypic characters (Hodgins, 1993, p. 104). This approach also works to temper unsympathetic characters as they emerge in a piece of writing, for once writers acknowledge wholly negative characters as aspects of their own personality, they begin to understand them better and their stance towards the characters becomes more compassionate.

In the two dreams of Head Maiden I have related, the many spontaneous questions that arise for me suggest the richness of possible stories that might be constructed from this raw, unconscious content. I make my decision on the story I will peruse, based on my fascination. What is the image, thought, motif or character that persists in my consciousness? In this instance, it continues to be the Head Maiden, her
fatal voyage in search of the lost god, and now, her traumatic assertion “They wrote graffiti all over my body.” I am equally fascinated with the place Head Maiden finds herself—at the bottom of the ocean in the land of the sacrificed. These elements, therefore, are the known elements I will bring to my story’s construction. Still unknown to me are the very basic structures that will support the story: the narrative point of view, for example, the type and kind of story I might write, and a host of other stylistic elements.

In the pre-writing preparation for my story, I considered various autobiographical details in my life, specifically those concerning the endeavours of producing a thesis. The topics that were engaging me in this activity were new pedagogical approaches to textual creations and constructions (specifically approaches that give voice to the feminine unspoken), and I felt that Head Maiden’s assertion “They wrote graffiti all over my body” had a particular resonance. What is the textual creation of Head Maiden’s body? Is the act of writing upon the body of another an act of taking possession of it? Are the voices of the body and head different? Irreconcilable? The story that began to emerge in my mind’s eye was a metafiction, a fiction in which Head Maiden self-consciously speaks about writing, specifically the writing on her missing body, and considers the body as text: her missing textual body. Yet I was also pulled in another, less conscious direction, one that wished only to surrender to Head Maiden’s experience and discover her trauma.
With his finest hala brushes, my father painted pictures on my flesh. Beautiful water lilies full of sunshine, morning-glories with the luster of stars. He would spend hours creating gardens so profuse that perfume rose from his pallet, and into these gardens he'd render snakes and lizards, turtles and fish, flocks and flocks of sleek and colourful birds.

"It is the world and all its wonder I wish to give to you, my little Kapa," he would say, for Kapa was the name he called me, not Kapo, as my mother had formally named me. Her name had found its way to me through her sleeping visions, for she dreamed of a woman without a vagina, the goddess Kapo, and the people of our village had for a long time considered this name impure.

My father's name, however, was more acceptable. A name that paid tribute to our blankets and clothing, for kapa is the fabric our people pound from trees. My father, himself, was a kapa maker, and so in his name for me there existed a clever allusion, which the people of our village also enjoyed. And I, his diminutive Kapa, whom he took great pleasure in decorating, assumed this identity, forgoing the original destiny of my namesake as an impenetrable goddess.

The literal meaning of the word kapa is "the beaten one," and this is what my father named me. My father, whom I love. My father, who is responsible for all the earthly pleasure that I ever enjoyed, for I learned
pleasure through his touch and the gifts of the natural world through his renderings. I cannot help but want him, though my want creates waves in this underworld that threaten to send me spinning through clouds of sea. I cannot stop myself from loving him. My love is a chasm of hopelessness. There is an ache in the place where my body ought to be. My love for him does not produce his love for me.

"Why hast thou forsaken me, father?"

With twig and driftwood between my teeth, I write this in the sand. Bubbles stream from my nostrils, and I am flung past a severed hand, a torso, over shale and coral, into the jawbones of a whale. It is better not to let the words out. Better not allow them to imprint their torment, it only makes waves. Waves without substance. Voiceless waves that never will reach the islands of his ears. I must not lose my head, but try to use it, since it’s the only thing I have left now. The fish who jabber and swish remind me—RE-MIND me! “Hysteria,” their fine pale lips mouth the words. Yet I am without. WITH OUT! And the sudden barnacles punish my forehead and chin, rocks split my lips, sand fills my eyes.

What exists here that can save me? Oh, good mother of the sea, deliver me! Lead me to my body...or a body I may claim. How the infernal chorus of fish mock: “I ain’t got no body...”; they lip sync, and my lips sink into sand, and I choke out mouthfuls of slimy regret, mouthfuls of rage, numb mouthfuls of betrayal. Let the waters clear, let my eyes release this salty sand and be opened. Around and around, I spin again, ungrounded, in motion.
Above me, sunlight, cutting through the water like an axe, the faint unfolding of a vessel. As it submerges into these murky depths it shimmers with diamond speckles, and I see all at once that it is not a ship, sinking, sinking into this quick sand, but a shop of some kind, a store, that has gone, as they say, “under.” I watch it in its elegant ballet, twisting like a great white whale, until at last it has turned completely belly up, and its subduction draws me to its threshold. I am so overwhelmed with compassion.

And here is a door, yielding and creaking, sucking me back into the place I must go, a sea of syllables, an ocean of words, a barque rigged with books that open and shut on their shelves like vanes for all weathers, shelves upon shelves of soggy, dog-eared books, embossed with the thumb prints of browsers, wrinkled and yellowed by the accession of time. I feel an ache in the place my body should be. For didn’t they write all over my body? Didn’t they make of it a yarn; a myth, my father called it. “They will mythologize you, my little Kapa.” But already I could read the writing on the wall.

“Our god is lost,” my father told me, “and because of this, all that grows and thrives in our village is threatened.”

“Is that my doing, father?” I asked.

“In a village, things that go wrong are everyone’s doing,” my father said. Yet even then I knew this was not true.

“It is a great honour to sacrifice,” my father tried convincing me.

“There is no honour greater.”
"I don't need honour, father, really. Let somebody else have it."

"Ask your mother, Kapa, she will explain."

He only invoked my mother when he knew he couldn't convince me himself. My mother would make me guilty. She would show me the place where she had given her tongue. I had seen it often. A dark black scar running like a pair of twisted lips at the back of her throat. She would make that terrible gurgling sound and nod her head.

"Your mother has been honoured," my father said.

I could not bear thinking of it. My father, whom I loved and trusted beyond reason, who had become two parents in one to me, already had an arrangement with the village chief, with the medicine man, with the council of elders. He had promised my body in exchange for a story, my totality for a myth.

And yet here, in this tub of sodden storybooks, in the aisles of this great overturned beast, I must read—and reread—everything. I must acknowledge the story while seeing it as nothing but a husk of fleeting limbs.

What is this place, anyway? There is a skewed sign over the door and a small black flag. "Independent Book Seller's Association": I can just make it out. The letters are disintegrating on the sign and I am losing my head. A trembling shelf collapses, my poor face presses fast into the pages of a book, like a flower, like a keepsake. And my rolling eyes will not shut.

Is there meaning in the fact that all is disrupted?
The mind continues to read even when the world has been severed from the eyes' gaze and all one can see is the blur of a word, a spot of ink...

Right now, I wish only for a mind that does not ponder: to be a head eternally severed from a body, a daughter severed from all knowledge of the father she loves. Either way I am caught inside this story just as my face is capsized inside this soggy book.

If my father were here, would he lift the sodden pages from my eyes? Kiss my sand-scraped brow and lips? Would he say, “Kapa, my poor dear love, this is not right. This is not what anyone intended for you.” If my father were here, would he take me home?

I refuse to believe that he sent me here. He could not have known. But it was he who led me to that altar. He who relinquished me to that stone as if he were handing me to a husband. “You must leave me now,” he said, without expression, without a kiss.

There is an ache in the place my body used to be. The chief and medicine man both came before I had a chance to speak. It had been raining and the pitch of the sky and the heaviness of the damp stone gagged me. What if I had fallen on my knees and pleaded? Would my father have walked away?

The medicine man poured a draft of bitter liquid down my throat, and I was made naked and stretched upon the stone. The liquid made it so there was little feeling in my body then, though the chief’s hard hands tested my flesh and the cold still cuts through my phantom limbs.
In and out of sleep I swam, closing my eyes, and seeing my father. His touch was always warm, and I did not need to think beyond this. But soon the chief’s voice began to question, and the drug I had been given made it impossible for me to ignore him. Had I lost my maidenhead? He would not probe too long to discover, lest he damage me, and knowing that the drug made me incapable to fight or lie, he put the question to me.

My father’s warmth was what I remembered. The warmth of his body and the warmth of his bed, and the warmth of his voice, softly loving me and the tip of his hala brush gently stroking my skin. Would the story of my severing be any different if I had given a different answer?

I wonder how my father suffered over this union which was more blessed than any divine binding he could conceive. I know he prayed for its undoing not realizing its impossibility, for as the medicine man told me, a daughter once spoiled can no easier be unspoiled than a head once severed can be rejoined to the body’s flesh and bone.

I assured my father I would do as he told me, even though the pain of the knife’s blade carving my flesh, as I feel it now in my phantom limbs, was nothing to the pain of obedience. Oh, the hell of the head and its propensity to ponder!

And what if I were to create a story now of my father refusing to take me to that stone altar, of his telling me instead to gather my things. We could have left the village together, taken a boat. “There are more islands in the ocean than stars in the night sky,” I will have my father say.
to me. I will have us looking at the bright cold night stars together. Could we have sailed to one of these islands?

   The saltwater has now become as treacherous as mountain ice and wind, and it is only thoughts of self-destruction that my mind creates from this grief. My mother's articulate black scar. The dark red spittle of her rage. I read it now in the lines and creases of this flaccid book that fills my eyes. This is the way all villages keep their women silent and their men bound to obey, and it is a story older than any I might create, gouged into granite. It is the story of duty and the invisible orphaned head and body that fill the vacuum of a village. Who is the severed god, if he is not love?

   Over the barbs of sea anemone and stingray wings this sorry being that I am asks now only for death, for there is no hell greater than the head's life beyond the body. A life of knowing without the physical means to change. These pummelling rocks and shells, these head-splitting, jaw-breaking breakers do nothing to finish me off. I roll and roll in a futility of this understanding that the god whom you sent me to seek, with my eyes and mind, the god whom you gave me up to, had never, until the moment you cast me off, been lost to us.

   The light above is blinding. I must read and reread the shadows as they stretch across my mind, shadows that hold the history of nations in their distended folds. Without a body, my inner eye has grown as keen and hungry as a lamprey. There is a sharpness in its discerning that will not succumb to the pleasure of touch. The loss of a body is a painful
whetting for the mind. Like blood finding a path to the heart or roots a channel to moisture, the mind is driven towards what sustains and restores it. And here, aimlessly caught in the erratic pulse of my own grief’s tides, the bright world unfurling its dark undertow, the spongy books rusting in their trestles, I see the story and I think this may be the head’s only method of reconnection—for it is the body’s voice with its naturally lewd and unselfconscious gesticulations that must be hushed and sent away. Let these be the currents that clear my eyes of bleached and twisted words, for once I have followed their motion, they are no longer formidable.

Because my phantom body and my absent father fills my every thought, I am certain that the strength of what is lacking must be greater than the strength of what exists, but I am not certain that in absence I will find there is presence more profound.

Oh, weary mind, to disremember. The greatest hell is that our plundered salvation exists inside our minds, and that our minds exist eternally beyond hell’s doors. Just listen to the hell of it!

Let me peel my face free from these pages and behold the world I have sunken to. The belly of the library, this broken ribbed whale who spills poetry onto these beached floors like blood, and the fish who mock me with their fat-lipped kisses. Oh, father, this is what sacrifice has wrought?
“My dear Kapa,” I will have you speak! I will savour your voice as if you were by my side and your breath touching my hair.

Do you recall, father, our walks under the thick-palms and nights heavy with hyacinth? How you showed me the jelly-coated stems of honey-plants? How wrenching to pull free. I still feel this in my absent body.

Your wife, my mother, watched from her wounded window. Her gaze as dark and damaged as a cat’s. She contemplated the punishments that awaited me while you entreated my greatest compassion. “She is your mother, Kapa, my wife.” You spoke as if labels should mean more than what is felt. You insisted upon my obedience. You are a lover of the letter of the law, for you know the law is as fluid as the ocean. Lovers can be sent away and changed into letters. Legions of letters and stories.

Oh, the commotion of jolly jellyfish and squid. Moments ago, they squished through the portals: all have come to view the phenomenon of me—a grieving head, derailed from the balustrade of her body. How they snip and snicker, sting and suck, hungry for the story of my wretchedness—and the wretchedness of all these fallen from a pen’s nipple, prone and decumbent on this murky floor.

Enough! Enough! Let the mind forgo this muddle. Let the head rise into these currents of grief, into the threat of life ever lasting, into these amputations, let its absent voice ripple the world in the fullness and decollation of undying love.
Thoughts on the Writing of “The Voyage of Head Maiden”

Initially, in the writing of this story, I attempted to allow the work Helene Cixous to inform it: Cixous’ (1977) novel *Angst* has such lines as, “Cut. You say I. And I bleed. I am outside. Bleeding. Yet formless, helpless, almost bodiless. In and out of my body. In pain. Here, I no longer have what I once had; you no longer know what you once knew” (p. 7); they seemed particularly apt for my character’s dilemma. As well, this author has articulated the abandonment and estrangement of the feminine by the mother and the adoption by the father. I found very quickly, however, that the impulse of my conscious ego to implant theory into the head of my be-headed heroine was re-enacting the sacrifice which had already been carried out upon her. I was forsaking the organic body of the story, as it might develop, in favour of disembodied intellectual theorizing.

I experienced a great deal of anxiety in writing this story for a number of reasons; perhaps chief among them was the fact that it ought to be saying something about writing and the writing process, and that it should also be saying something specific about feminine voicelessness. I could not make it say what I thought it ought to be saying, nor, as I wrote it, could I hear it saying anything different. I began to question the possibility of actually producing fiction with a pedagogical purpose. I was attacked by inner voices that cast doubt on the value of the whole endeavour.

There was a point when I stopped writing the story completely; another point when I went back to it and began hacking out large segments of mostly nascent theorizing; and then a point again when I went back, looking for some actual guts to the story that might act as a buoy line for me, to get me back on the right track. I had to commit myself to writing the story—not to writing the story as a component for my thesis. This was difficult, since knowing my energy for writing was limited and knowing that the majority of this energy right now must be spent in the writing of my thesis, I did not feel I could afford to write a story for its own sake. The attacking inner voice agreed and added: “It’s not a very good story, anyway.” Over the course of many years of writing, I have had adequate opportunity to identify my “inner animus critics” and,
through identification, deal with them. This voice, however, one that worked to undermine my attempts to write this story, was something new—different from my usual committee. Combined with its comments regarding the actual writing was its definitive judgement that what I believed I could do pedagogically (through dreams and fiction show something about writing and the writing process and feminine voicelessness) could never be done. It is important for me to enlarge upon this process of doubt, along with my final commitment to write the story as it unfolded, because it touches upon an essential aspect of the writing process: what the author/ analyst Rollo May (1975) says “is characteristic of the highest types of courage” and is expressed in the contradiction “that we must be fully committed, but we must also be aware at the same time that we might possibly be wrong” (p. 13).

Without the addition of this strong, new, negative voice to my chorus of inner literary critics, I would not have re-visited the primacy of the creative struggle to elucidate that which has not yet come into being and might never actually arrive. This would have been easier for me as a writer. But as one who is attempting to cast light upon the writing process and guide others through its muddy shoals, the absence of this reminder would not have been as helpful. “Creative courage” as May points out, “is the discovering of new forms, new symbols, [and] new patterns on which a new society can be built” (p. 15) and is not just the jurisdiction of the conventional artist, but of any and all whose approach is one that seeks a revelation of consciousness. I continued writing the story in spite of my concern that not only might it not contribute anything to my research but also that it might, in the end, not be a very successful story. Technically, I struggled with the story as, due to the physical limitations of the character, most of it had to take place in her head. But even in this struggle, I was not disappointed, for it provided me with a new way of perceiving the four conventional elements of fiction: narration, dialogue, description, and detail and where they might be located in the body of a text: In being forced into the head of Head Maiden, I came to see “narration and “dialogue” as predominantly the functioning of the head, while “description” and “detail” resided in a body consciousness; furthermore, I was reminded how these elements could be linked to Jung’s typological distinctions, which I have already discussed. Narration would be connected to the “thinking function,” and dialogue, which is relational, would be connected to the “feeling function.” “Detail,” which comes about through the senses, would connect to the “sensation function,” while “description”, which often
metaphorically presents a dual or multiple understanding in fiction, would connect to Jung's (1971) idea of the “intuitive function” (pp. 330-407). As I wrote the story and remained in the head of Head Maiden, mainly through narration, I pondered on what I had taught on these four fictional elements and, as explained previously, on how similar they truly were to Jung's four functions. As mentioned previously, students often gravitated to one or two of them as dominants in their work.

In my teaching, I had stressed working to include all the elements as a kind of template for “good writing,” not even considering archetypal conceptions of a four-fold wholeness. But as I struggled with the lopsidedness of my technical situation in this particular story, I also began again to glean the problems of establishing didactic absolutes in fiction. A predominance of narration was essential to this story in order for the reader to experience the captivity and consumption, the torture, in effect, of Head Maiden’s thinking. In another story, the predominance of another element might be essential. What is important, then, is not so much the balancing of these elements in a given piece of fiction, but, as Jung’s typological model shows of the human personality, success depends upon one’s ability to use what is called for at a particular time.

Besides this understanding, which developed through states of despair and elation as the story manifested, a larger awareness descended upon me after the story was complete. As I groped for the revelation of this story in relation to dreams and writing, the writing process, and feminine voicelessness, and considered how all of this might or might not be viewed through a Jungian lens, I recalled an alchemical woodcut I had once seen of a decapitation in a book by Johannes Fabricius (1976). Going to that source, I discovered the picture from the alchemical text “Splendor Solis” and what was written on a paper in the executioner’s hands, translated as follows: “I have killed thee, that thou mayest receive a superabundant life, but thy head I will carefully hide, that the world may not see thee, and destroy thee in the earth; the body I will bury, that it may putrefy and grow and bear innumerable fruit” (p. 100). It should be noted that Jung resurrected the ancient texts, conceptions, terminology, and symbols of alchemy, discovering in the alchemical processes its metaphoric and psychological significance. For Jung (1983), the alchemical operation was not just the literal attempt to turn base matter into gold, but was a methodology of consciousness. As I considered the woodcut and thought about Jung’s understanding of alchemy as a kind of archetypal methodology, I suddenly became aware of what I had actually been doing with this story. I was using it in an alchemical way to
gain a greater consciousness of my own understanding about writing and the writing
process, and in doing so defining and establishing for myself a methodology for my
future work.

Before I explain further, I think it will be useful to outline briefly something about
alchemy and the alchemical process as viewed from a Jungian point of view. According
to Maria Louise von Franz (1980), two streams developed out of alchemy: one was the
extraverted stream which focused on the external material world and the physical
processes of transmuting actual base metal into gold. The other was the introverted
stream, which located the base metal internally. The goal in this instance was to
transmute the internal substance of the soul into something more enduring. Before these
two streams separated, the physical processes of alchemy and the spiritual metaphoric
processes of alchemy were one. In the process of grappling with the physical processes of
the task of turning one substance into another, the alchemist was also engaged in “soul
work.” This was because the alchemist of old presupposed that the mystery of the
structure of the universe resided in him as well as in all other matter. He believed he
could seek answers to the great universal questions both by internal imaginative dialogue
with inner symbols, characters, and manifestations and by imaginatively consulting or
working with external matter. Over time, the one stream became two. The literal
extroverted stream developed into chemistry and the introverted stream was lost. Jung
took it upon himself to resurrect the introverted stream in the development of his
psychology.

Jung also pointed out this same schism in Christianity. Jung was one of the first
people to renew an interest in the Gnostics and their writings. According to Elaine Pagels
(1979) the Orthodox Christians’ battle with the Gnostics was a battle of literal and
metaphoric thinking as well as a predominantly masculine mode of understanding, which
sought to suppress the feminine side of an androgynous mode (p. 49). Like the
introverted stream of alchemy, the metaphoric mode of Gnosticism was lost to the
literalism of Orthodox Christianity. Metaphorically, the head was severed from the body.
The Gnostic gospels, along with the great alchemical texts, like the head in the woodcut
of the “Splendor solis,” were hidden from the view of the world. In some instances, they
were hidden physically, like the Gnostic codices found near the town of Naj Hammadi.
Metaphorically, they were hidden, in the symbolic and poetical language used in the
texts.
Consider the lines of the executioner:

I have killed thee, that thou mayest receive a superabundant life, but thy head I will carefully hide, that the world may not see thee, and destroy thee in the earth; the body I will bury, that it may putrefy and grow and bear innumerable fruit. (Fabricius, p. 100)

What can these words possibly mean? Or consider the following from the Gospel of Thomas:

Jesus saw infants being suckled. He said to his disciples, “These infants being suckled are like those who enter the Kingdom.” They said to him, “Shall we, then, as children, enter the Kingdom?” Jesus said to them, “When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and female one and the same... then you will enter [the Kingdom].” (Pagels, 1979, p. 129)

These kinds of metaphoric, symbolic, poetic passages express an authentic resonance of something beyond a literal understanding. They create in the reader a state of inquiry and a state of chaos, where conventional literal modes of understanding can no longer be used for absolute answers or definitions. One must grapple with and ponder such passages if they are to become meaningful. Similarly, dreams have this same quality, as often do the symbolic, metaphoric, and poetic content that emerges from our unconscious and expressed itself in our writing. The alchemist of old was not simply an observer in the process of transmutation, but also transmutation’s participant. To reiterate the Gnostic line, which is also an alchemical directive: “The two becomes the one.” In the creative writing process, the writer is both observer and participant, both reader and writer of the work created, who, like the alchemist creates a vessel, and projects into it. Writers can thus imaginatively enter into a dialogue with the objects and characters of their creation, and can bring forward an evolution of consciousness with their art. As I look into the Head Maiden story and acquaint myself more thoroughly with alchemical symbolism, I discover many points of contact. In a very general way, the head and body being severed metaphorically outline the alchemical operation as Jung (1970) conceived of it: The alchemical operation consisted essentially in separating the prima materia, the so-called chaos, into the active principle, the soul, and the passive principle, the body. (p. 58). These were eventually reunited in the “chymical marriage” of the personified forms of the masculine, Sol, and the feminine Luna.
The beheading was the first step in the alchemical process of redemption, and represented the mortificatio and putrefacatio that generally followed the coniunctio. Every union is followed by death in alchemy, until the last and final state is achieved. Alchemy used the motifs of head and beheading in various ways. Zosimos an early alchemist, connected the head with the omega element, by which he meant the arcane substance, or the mysterious nature of the [philosopher's] stone. In the symbolism of the head, Jung saw an allusion to the head of Osiris in Egyptian mythology, and the cycle of death and resurrection. Beheading, removing the head from its body, means separating the mysterious substance that leads to rebirth and transformation into its fundamental opposites. Moreover, since the head has to do with consciousness, beheading stands for the separation of consciousness from the body, and is the first step leading to the conjunction that [was] termed the unio mentalis, or mental union. Beheading or putrefactio initiates the work and also represents the separation of the animating, conscious principle from the prima materia. (Raff, 2000, p. 169)

Furthermore, Raff explains that sacrifice may be understood in alchemy as the ego’s relinquishing of control.

To achieve the first level of union with the unconscious, the ego must surrender its sense of being master of the psyche. No longer can it do what it wishes without regard for other voices in the unconscious. No longer can it reject imagination or the still small voice within. [The ego] having abdicated its prideful role as the sun ruling the heavens...descends into the underworld and finds the vulnerability and openness required for real union with the unconscious. (p. 169)

Interestingly, the beheading of a masculine figure (a king) and the beheading of a feminine figure (a queen) have different implications in alchemy. “In the ritual beheading, the alchemist sought the essential and mysterious arcane substance, the prima materia, represented by the figure that loses its head. In the case of a king, the substance is the principle of consciousness. For the queen, it is the animating, spiritual force that produces images—the imagination itself” (p. 170). Perhaps most pertinent to the development of an alchemical methodology of Creative Writing and to this section of this thesis is the comment: “In the union of self-awareness and imaginative power, the alchemist sought to realize an essential part of the self’s mystery. If the work succeeds, the self not only discovers who and what it is; it learns how to channel the imaginative power in the process of its own manifestation” (pp. 170-171).

Other alchemical symbols, processes and themes are also manifest in “The Voyage of Head Maiden.” For example, Head Maiden finds herself at the bottom of the ocean. The ocean and water in general is a symbol system in alchemy related to the operation of solutio. “Solutio is an image of a descent into the unconscious that has the
effect of dissolving the solid, ordered structure of the ego” (Edinger, 1994, p. 54). The
book-boat that sinks into the ocean is also symbolic alchemically. “The boat signifies a
crossing into another world, a journey into the land of the dead in search of renewal. The
body of water symbolizes the unconscious or inner world, or the world of the imaginal”
(p. 172). In a number of alechemical woodcuts, we also discover the connection between
the library (mental operations) and laboratory (physical operations). Both are required in
the alchemical quest, as they are in the creation of fiction. The writer’s mental operations,
like the alchemist’s, are an engagement with the imaginal, while the physical operation,
or the actual technical side of writing a story, is akin to lab work.

With my own fiction writing, there is always a sense of experimentation and
uncertainty. Often, I will begin a piece of writing with an attempt to learn something
about a particular technical issue. For example, in a story I wrote, “The Beacon” (Sonik,
2000, pp. 9-15), I attempted to work with narrative voice as an indicator of character. I
wanted to see if it were possible to render a character purely through voice. Often my
experimentation takes the form of dealing with some technical problem that I had not
anticipated requiring a certain kind of procedure. In the case of “The Voyage of Head
Maiden,” for example, I have already outlined my technical struggle of trying to stay in
the head of my character and work mainly in the mode of narration. In being forced to
measure out carefully the various elements of a story’s parts, I gained new insights into
both the nature and process of writing.

The theme of incest is a constant in alchemical texts. As Edward Edinger (1994)
states: “The Philosophers’ Stone is a product of incest—a crime on the concrete level and
a sacred mystery on the inner psychological level” (p. 102). Symbolic incest, according to
Edinger, refers to the relationship between the ego and the self. The unconscious self
gives birth to the ego, or “I” consciousness. If this “I” consciousness pursues a
relationship with the self, the ego becomes the parent of a reborn self. This incestuous
alchemical union is very much in evidence in the process of fiction writing, where an
image or an idea arises from the unconscious and the ego seeks to establish a relation
with it through an imaginative encounter.

In one alchemical text, the philosopher’s daughter, who is eventually revived by
“the soul from heaven,” is the female half of the dead bisexual King’s body. The King is
both father and mother as well as lover and brother of the daughter (Fabricius, p. 158).
Interestingly, the stone is called “daughter” by the philosopher (Edinger, 1994, p. 100).
and the beheaded head is also considered to be the philosopher's stone, as is Jesus Christ in the Western European alchemical traditions (Raff, p. xviii). And love, which Head Maiden serves and continually evinces, is essential in the alchemical operation of the coniunctio. The coniunctio is the experience of union, which is followed by death (p. 119). Head Maiden is sacrificed after her union with her father. Her story could be perceived as the alchemical operation of putrefactio in which her grief acts as a transformative agent of consciousness. Psychologically and creatively, the writer experiences these moments or periods of coniunctio when the self and ego are one and the writing flows. These periods are inevitably followed by death and putrefactio, moments when it feels as if one's every effort is directed towards re-establishing union. This certainly was my experience in attempting to write this story. It is during this grieving period of putrefactio that strength of both ego and self is accumulating. Over time, the union state of ego and self remains for longer and longer periods.

The first coniunctio is a transitory experience, for the self is not yet strong enough to manifest all the time. It is still relatively weak compared to the other forces within the unconscious, and so it appears and then disappears. This is unfortunately the most frustrating experience for most people. Having tasted the reality of union with the self, it is most disheartening and even agonizing to lose it.... In order to navigate this phase of the work one must bear in mind that the self cannot remain in contact with the ego for long. It manifests in an experience that the ego will enjoy, and then it will disappear to the ego's horror. The ego must accept this pain and accept the disappearance of its friend. (p. 119)

Love is a supremely important element in both self and artistic development, for it allows one to withstand the pain and devastation of the lost union, and the courage, strength and desire to actively seek or patiently await a necessary reunion for further development. "The love between the ego and the self—especially the self as an inner figure—is a primary motivating force in the coniunctio process. Without that love, the hardships and difficulties one encounters on the path are insurmountable" (p. 175).

In my own development I can recall my first experience of feeling that particular love for writing. I was in grade two and our writing assignment was intended to be a current event activity. We were asked to write a synopsis of a news story. The story I was given was about a prize-winning racehorse. Even though I knew what was required for the assignment, a few paragraphs outlining the news story, I found myself inside of the race horse's consciousness, recalling his many trials and tribulations prior to his win, and his speculations upon his future life now. I recall the glorious heat and energy of that
little creation, which I think turned out to be about three pages long—and I also recall the mortification I experienced afterwards, in having to return to the world of the classroom and hand in the work. With that assignment, however, I had been completely overtaken by the experience of writing, and longed forever after to re-create it. I believe my entire writing life began with that assignment and what could be considered my first artistic coniunctio.

Another important image found in many alchemical texts is that of the virgin. Originally, when I first began working with the dream image of Head Maiden, I became aware that a reversed order of the two words in her name would render "maidenhead." The village chief is meant only to sacrifice virgins on his altar. Head Maiden's father believes that if she lies about her lost maidenhead, she will still be allowed the honours that he believes her blood sacrifice will confer. Again, the image of the alchemical virgin brings to consciousness the literal and metaphoric considerations and contradictions which are also inherent in the incest themes. The virgin mothers Isis, Mary, and Sophia are all subjects of alchemical musings and bring to alchemical operations various feminine qualities (Fabricius, 1976 p. 119). Mythically, Isis collects Osiris' dismembered body and through love re-members it. Mary, through love, gives birth to Christ. Sophia, the divine principle of Wisdom, existed before God and is his consort and lover (Schaup, 1997, pp. 5-7). Elaine Pagels (1979), considering Gnostic sources of the divine mother, shows her identified both with "intelligence" and with "silence" (p. 50). The Gnostic teacher and poet Valentinus "suggests that the divine can be imagined as a dyad; consisting, in one part, of the Ineffable, the Depth, the Primal Father, and in the other, of Grace, Silence, the Womb and 'Mother of the All'. He reasons that Silence is the appropriate complement of the Father, designating the former as feminine and the latter as masculine, because of the grammatical gender of the Greek words. He goes on to describe how Silence receives, as in a womb, the seed of the Ineffable Source-- from this she brings forth all the emanations of divine being, ranged in harmonious pairs of masculine and feminine energies" (p. 50). In another Gnostic text Pagels notes that, "from the power of Silence appeared 'a great power, the Mind of the Universe, which manages all things, and is male...the other...a great Intelligence...is a female which produces all things'" (p. 51).
In the popular mind, Jung’s psychoanalytical approach is almost synonymous with the interpretation of dreams. This is perhaps understandable since he did place considerable emphasis on the exploitation of our dreams as a means of understanding the unconscious. Similarly, I have also argued that dreams can be an almost unparalleled resource for the writing of fiction. But there is, of course, much more to Jungian psychoanalysis, and Jung’s concept of the unconscious, than solely attention to dreams. In the writing of creative fiction also there are ways other than through dreams by which we can give voice to the voiceless feminine. One does not necessarily have to have a dream image, a dream motif, or a dream character, to be caught by the unconscious. Often, we are caught by the unconscious contents we project on real external objects, people and situations. We will often discover that our response to certain external worldly things is unexpectedly powerful and that as a consequence they remain in our thinking long after they have evaporated from our immediate experience. Working with these motifs, objects and people may open portals of discovery for student writers.

The following story that I wrote illustrates how one might work with a real life character. The character, named Mama Cassava, is a bag lady based on a woman I once saw in Los Angeles who caught my imagination. She had set up a makeshift house in an alleyway and was having heated conversations with imaginary people as she waved her angry fists skyward. I was nineteen-years-old at the time, and her anger terrified me. She became, in my imagination, the image of all bag ladies, hurling obscenities at the world. Twelve years passed before I was ready to explore this character in my fiction. By then I was incorporating many of Jung’s concepts into my approach. Besides attempting to find the place where this bag lady resided in my psyche and, perhaps, the collective psyche, I was now also investigating the power and potentialities of symbolic realities. My character, Mama Cassava, spontaneously takes up her crazy fight against the government buildings in order to save the moon. As I considered these strongly masculine and feminine symbols, it became clear to me that Mama Cassava’s unexpressed intent was to
restore the archetypal balance, not only in her own disrupted psyche but also in the world. Mama Cassava is a character who, I discovered, had suffered the plight of the devalued feminine in an inflated masculine culture. She is the voiceless shadow of a patriarchal society because she speaks in a language that is incomprehensible to those who are either unaware or are unwilling to engage with the contents of the unconscious. Like the bag lady I saw in Los Angeles, Mama Cassava is also black. As an inhabitant of my psyche, I began to see her as the archetypal “Dark Feminine” or “Madwoman.”

In her work *Meeting the Madwoman: An Inner Challenge for Feminine Spirit*, Leonard (1993) writes: “both the Bag Lady and the black woman have been mistreated, and their images carry negative projections in our culture. In this sense they symbolize the rejected side of the feminine that is characterized as offbeat, peculiar, crazy, or mad and that has been scorned by our white, patriarchal society” (p. 171). Leonard identifies “the Bag Lady” as an archetypal figure who “brings up our fears of loneliness, insecurity, and homelessness,” yet “represents a feminine side of ourselves that can mutter crazy wisdom. As a survivor of the streets, she possesses a certain feminine strength that has no need of patriarchal values” (p. 7). Engaging with Mama Cassava, as character, symbol, and projection, I was conscious of being initiated into the archetypal energy of the voiceless feminine. I came to know a wise symbolic aspect of her power that appears, to masculine modes of understanding and interpretation, completely insane. Leonard suggests that the counterpart to the “Madwoman” is “the Judge.” She sees these two archetypal forces as “dangerously out of balance and in opposition to each other.” “When we split apart these energies in our psyche and behavior,” she writes, “we lose the inherent connection between discriminating judgement and instinct” (p. 15). These observations can be applied to Creative Writing practice and pedagogy as well, for when we are taught that our critical, technique-driven, judgements supersede the movements of our innate psyches (to the extent that our internal worlds are not even factored into the pedagogical equation) we are left with a disproportionate amount of ego, as well as an unconscious that attempts to speak, but one we can not hear, because we do not understand its language.
The Overseer

Mama Cassava's plywood lean-to sat smack in the middle of everywhere, nestled between two tall government buildings with tops so high and sharp they almost cut the moon.

"You be careful up there," Mama Cassava shouted to the buildings, "don't you go choppin' apart somethin' you got no right to touch." She swept the alleyway with stiff rags and newspapers tied together on the broken branch of one of those potted trees you see lining the street in front of shopping malls.

Sometimes over the din of honking horns and police sirens, she heard her broom talking. Right now, it was saying, "sweep clean, sweep clean," and it was piling up small, brown glass gems made out of beer bottles, crinkly see-through paper, cigarette butts, and the soulless, dusty footprints of big, wing-tipped shoes.

Most people walking past barely noticed her muttering to her talking broom and shouting at the buildings, who obediently pulled back whenever she told them off. Fewer still noticed the little, grey cardboard sign swinging outside her place announcing her business.

But every now and again, some civil servant from one of the big buildings next door, or some desperado, or some searching soul, would short cut through the alley, see her sign, and get curious, for Mama Cassava dealt in futures.
She had an old deck of mismatched playing cards and a lively candle, made from a tin can and creosote rags, whose flame never expired. She'd set the cards down on a cardboard box anyway they chose to be set, and she'd rock back on an old wooden orange crate, "Uuuunnhuh, mmmmm," she'd listen to what the cards had to tell her, and then she'd talk.

"Don't you try foolin' yourself into believin' you got a right, you're bein' unfaithful to a good woman," she'd say, or "You been stealin' money from where you work, you gotta come clean, and make it up." Mama Cassava didn't hold with pussy footing. "You're as selfish as a shellfish," she'd shout. It didn't matter to Mama Cassava that the enquirer went all red, squirmed around like a worm at the end of a hook and vanished into the night without so much as a thank you. Sometimes people needed a powerful dose of truth to kick start them in the direction of the future, and she knew that was why they'd ended up coming to her.

Along with doses of truth, Mama Cassava sometimes prescribed special medicines she'd made herself, consisting of anything from alley sweepings to plants she'd come across in parks, to government documents she'd rescued from sanitation bins, to the fur, fangs and fleas of stray dogs and cats, who came, usually bearing important information, or occasionally just for a friendly chat.

"You take this, sweet pea," she'd say to young women who arrived in terrible straits, handing them little clumps of wilty, green leaves. "You
forget all about that old coat hanger notion. Mama Cassava ain’t gonna let you die."

And the young women would kiss the raggedy fringes at the bottom of the old lady’s skirt. But Mama Cassava didn’t concern herself much with gratitude. "You get up now," she’d say, "you got a future waitin’ on you."

Mama Cassava was rarely anxious, rarely worried, but lately she swept the alleyway late, late, into the night with one eye on the moon and the other on those mischievous government buildings, asking her broom, "Who’s gonna take care of things when I’m gone?"

The broom didn’t like the thought of her not being around, so it only said, "sweep clean," and tried to get her talking on another subject.

It seemed to Mama Cassava, especially over the past few years, there’d been too much traffic through the alleyway, and lately, she’d been seeing troubles she’d never had to put right before. She was getting more and more people coming to her whose futures had been snuffed before they’d started living. Children who’d been abandoned by young women who hadn’t found their way to Mama Cassava in time, teenage drug addicts with needle death sentences, and adults with their hearts torn right out, numb to the touch of truth—vacant and futureless.

Mama Cassava was getting tired looking for medicines that seemed to be increasingly in short supply, except for the alley sweepings, which were always plentiful but not always of good quality, and her cards were getting frayed around the edges and tired too. But most threatening were
the government buildings, which had begun to multiply and were starting
to get uppity and hard to keep in line. There were five or six of them
now, and they laughed and swayed and jousted with one another, and
intimidated the moon with their sabre sharp points. "I'm warnin' you,"
Mama Cassava shouted, her voice still strong, though a little scratchy and
weary, "you settle down up there, or you'll be wishin' you never got built."

Her threats meant less and less to them. They mocked her with an
echo. "Never got built, never got built, never," they said and poked at the
moon.

Mama Cassava couldn't let them out of her sight for a second, and
alley traffic was getting hectic. Every morning now there were crushed
and empty-looking people waiting outside her lean-to. Sometimes there
were lines that stretched all the way back to the housing projects.

When Scrawny, the tabby, came hunting for her, he could barely get
through. Mama Cassava had pulled her orange crate chair, table box, and
creosote rag candle outside her lean-to and was setting card after tired
card out in front of her as she kept vigil over the government buildings.

"I'm too busy to visit," she told the tabby, setting down the next six
cards and hunting in her shabby, empty pocket for some medicine she
thought she might still have a sprinkling of.

The tabby wound himself around her ankles, then jumped up on
her lap and shinnied up her hunched shoulders. He had to nibble at her
ear before he got her attention, but finally she folded up her cards and
listened.
It seemed the birds had overheard the government buildings talking. The buildings declared war on the moon. "Sharp, reckless, useless," the buildings chanted, "cut her to ribbons tonight."

Mama Cassava shook her head. "You'd think something so lofty would know better," she told the cat, and turned over the fluttering little cardboard sign hanging on her lean-to. She would be doing no more business today.

The people lining the alley moved on. Those who had homes went there; those who didn't went back to the park. A nervous silence screamed through the middle of everywhere. Mama Cassava's broom twitched with terror.

"Uuuhuh, mmmm," Mama Cassava said, gazing into the growing blue centre of the flame of her candle. "Them buildings got to be stopped." But strangers carrying briefcases passing by the street in front of her alley didn't hear a word. And when Mama Cassava took to those same streets, shouting and mumbling, carrying her candle in one hand and waving the other in a fist, no one would meet her eye; it was as if she'd become invisible. Even the government buildings stood up straight at first, whistled and pretended not to see her.

"I know what you got up your sleeves," she shouted at them. "I know what you're all up to."

A couple of buildings jumped, another couple pulled back. She smashed their windows with her bare fists. "Cut her to ribbons," they called, "cut her to ribbons."
Blood trickled down Mama Cassava's arms into the tin can of her candle and was sucked right up by the creosote rags. The flame skipped and danced and jumped through the windows, tickling curtains and walls with fingers as bright as the moon.

"Stop," the buildings shrieked, "Oh, please, stop, you're cracking us up!" And the nimble, fiery fingers showed no mercy, but proceeded travelling to the most sensitive spots that the buildings squirmed desperately to conceal.

By dawn, the fire was extinguished. Mama Cassava stood in the centre of the smoking ruins. An ambulance took her to a hospital. Her arms were bandaged so she couldn't move them, and she was laced down to a bed in a room that locked from the outside. Through the room's barred windows she could only watch the city and see the government buildings growing back like warts.

"You gotta watch them buildings," she called to the nurses. "Them buildings want to cut apart the moon."
In the process of writing “The Overseer” (2000), many of the things I discovered about my character, Mama Cassava, informed my understanding of the feminine.” To begin with, her name, which arose from my unconscious and of which, at first, I had no conscious understanding, gradually revealed to me its significance. Because this character is identified as “Mama,” she has a connection to the mother archetype. Jung (1982) outlines the qualities associated with this archetype as follows:

Maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magic transformation and rebirth, together with the underworld and its inhabitants, are presided over by the mother. On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate. (p. 110)

The second part of my character’s name, “Cassava,” (which arose in my imagination stressed on the first syllable, “kas” and the last syllable “va”) did not register in my consciousness as the word “cassava” (with the stress on the second syllable “sa.”) until the connection was pointed out to me. A “cassava” is a plant with starchy tuberous roots from which flour is made. Even though I was unconscious of the word and its meaning, its significance as something organic, rooted and sustaining amplifies the character in the story, as well as amplifies the nature of the dark feminine.

The feminine principle is the earth force. ... Through ... roots it is connected with the primordial wisdom of the instincts, with the reality of immediate event and its need, with the patience of nature and its changing aspects of life, death and renewal. It is also connected with the waters deep under the earth, springs that may be tapped by the diving rod of eros. Acted upon by the hidden waters, this diving rod bends down to indicate the place where work must be done to release the hidden springs of creativity. From these creative springs arise visions of mysterious beauty or portents of terror and disaster, thoughts and impulses that spring to life from the “nowhere” which is far below the region of conscious knowledge. The unconscious is the wellspring of the feminine being. (Wickes, 1963, pp. 203-204)

The image of the “witch” (an image associated with the dark side of the mother in patriarchal cultures) is also evoked through the story’s main character. Not only can Mama Cassava read the future with her cards, but she can commune with animals and
hear the voices of inanimate objects. Annis V. Pratt (1981) tells us that “witches [historically] acted as midwives, advisors, and healers to their villages, gathered in colleges located on islands or in the mountains, controlled considerable property, and were particularly concerned with the feminine reproductive cycle.” It was “only with the Renaissance and Age of Reason” that “witch cults” and “covens” were “subjected to a patriarchal backlash” (p. 373). Ruth S El Saffar (1994) suggests that figures such as the witch “image forth that...which men and women alike must separate [from] if they are to find themselves acceptable in patriarchal culture.” She adds, however, that “separation is never complete, for the dark side of the mother ... only grows in power ... as she is banished from expression” (p. 22).

Typologically, Mama Cassava exhibits an intuitive/feeling dominance, undiluted by any integration of the more objective functions. She is, in effect, a character who compensates for the typological preferences of her society. She is what Leonard (1993) would call “a medial woman,” adding that “like Cassandra, medial women often encounter scorn of their intuitions. Women of a gentler temperament, like the introverted, intuitive, perceptive, feeling type, often fear to brave the attacks of more aggressive, judgmental thinkers. So they hide their insights, keeping to themselves, or they fail to develop ways to express the intuitions so fundamental to their nature” (p. 242). Mama Cassava’s intuition is a mode of expression in the realm of the archetypal feminine. It is, I believe, akin to what Robert Graves (1995) calls “poetic intuition.” He maintains that “all original discoveries and inventions and musical and poetical compositions” come about first through an intuitive flash, which then, only afterwards, can be framed, proven, or tested by inductive reasoning (pp. 343-344). Ira Progoff (1963) echoes this thought:

the major breakthroughs of knowledge have their origins in nonrational intuitions that burst unpredictably from the imaginative depths of personality....there has been increasing testimony from scientists to indicate that this is so. It has led to the awareness that a major need of the modern community is the development of an atmosphere that will stimulate and nurture the inward growth of creatively visionary persons. (p. 4)

Mama Cassava’s intuitive flash of the destruction of the archetypal feminine by masculine inflation is not translated into terms that “reason” can understand. Because of this, her intuition remains invalidated and unexpressed. As Leonard (1993) explains:
“modes of expression and being that are uniquely feminine or simply unconventional and therefore potentially creative are often disparaged by patriarchal cultures” (p. xvi).

In the following story (2000), “Madonna Rosa,” I attempted to investigate further the unexpressed qualities of the feminine. The name of the character, like that of Mama Cassava, arose spontaneously from the unconscious, and it was only after I had completed writing the piece that I became aware of both the divine and ironic implications of this title. The rose, for example “is in essence, a symbol of completion, of consummate achievement and perfection. Hence, accruing to it are all those ideas associated with these qualities: the mystic Centre, the heart, the garden of Eros, the paradise of Dante, the beloved, the emblem of Venus” (Cirlot, 1971, p. 275). Yet, when framed by rational judgement, the crazed and earthy Madonna Rosa comes across as anything but divine.

Leonard (1993) tells us, however, that “many of the Madwomen of mythology are Nature goddesses who warn of the dire consequences of living out of balance with the natural world and of disrespecting its procreative, destructive, and regenerative powers” (p. 8). Madonna Rosa, whose name can conjure the Virgin Mary, but whose person is far less ethereal, appears to be such a goddess. She descends to the world from a mountain top (mountains and mountain ranges, such as Mount Olympus, were often places thought to house the gods and goddesses), and sets to her work as artist/creator, but the world does not honour her divinity.

At this point I must briefly revisit the topic of dreams. In Jungian analysis, dreams are often considered in a progression of thematic groupings, which assist analyst and analysand in resurrecting archetypal patterns. For example, over the course of several months, an analysand may have dreams in which a particular character appears. Perhaps, in some of the dreams, the dreamer is attempting to escape from the character, and then in later dreams, the dreamer is attempting to fight the character or deal with him in a peaceful way. Perhaps the character speaks to the dreamer. All of these dreams might be considered together, in a series, in order to better understand the story the unconscious is trying to tell.

I discovered after writing “Madonna Rosa” that the same can be done with a series of stories. Pratt (1981) has suggested something on these lines: “Women’s fiction,” she writes, “[can] be read as a mutually illuminative or interrelated field of texts reflecting a preliterary repository of feminine archetypes …” (p. 368). Karen Elias-
Button (1992) also expresses this possibility through poetry in *Journey into an Archetype: The Dark Mother in Contemporary Women’s Poetry*. She suggests “that poetry is a form of self-discovery as well as redefinition for both poet and her audience, and that its refigured images of the Dark Mother can help everyone to assimilate into consciousness new definitions of the feminine” (p. 355). Student writers who learn to explore their works as interconnected and evolving texts are also likely to develop a greater appreciation, understanding, and handling of archetypal images. In my stories, for example, while both Mama Cassava and Madonna Rosa share similarities, I discovered that the significant differences between the two could provide me with clues about the nature of the feminine, and how her energies were evolving in my consciousness. Mama Cassava, as discussed earlier, does not exhibit her divine qualities as readily as Madonna Rosa. Not only is her name less conventionally associated with the images of divinity in our culture, but unlike Madonna Rosa, her origins remain unknown. The reader of “The Overseer” may well accept the character as indisputably insane. Her holy war in the service of the moon, while perhaps resonating in the reader, would not, in any way, establish a sanity that exists within our rational conceptions. The character’s persistence in attempting to express the Armageddon she intuits may easily be read as delusional. Madonna Rosa, on the other hand, establishes a divine origin at the outset—not only with her name and her mountain dwelling, but also with her mud-creating tears, which are evocative of an earth goddess. Her depiction as artist/creator furthers this association of the divine and establishes a collective association with the Christian biblical figure of Noah, who strove to save the animals of the earth from extinction. Because animals, symbolically, can be said to be related to the instinctual side of humankind, we can interpret Madonna Rosa as an earth goddess figure who hopes to re-establish human-kind with its instinctual creative energies—energies, which, the story demonstrates, are in great danger of being denigrated and destroyed. Materialism and literalism, as well as the inflation of the heroic and the conquering masculine principle (represented by the plaid-jacketed hunter), threaten Madonna Rosa’s creations and creative impulses, leading ultimately to her incarceration in a psychiatric institution and earthly death. Unlike “The Overseer,” which ends with no clear resolution, but rather a reiteration of the symbolic terror that Mama Cassava cannot make literal, “Madonna Rosa” ends with both her decisive return to the mountain she came from as well as the death of her physical form. Madonna Rosa as divine spokeswoman for the feminine escapes the confines of
patriarchal definition. Her instinctual powers save her. Pratt (1981) writes that "women’s ‘escape through imagination’ is not escapist but strategic, a withdrawal into the unconscious for the purpose of personal transformation" (p. 374). Madonna Rosa collects the instinctual energy of her rescue and carries it back to the realm of her origin—the feminine realm.
Madonna Rosa

When the snow brought its dusty morning, covering street lamps and traffic signals in a chilly luminous screen, Madonna Rosa looked beyond the square window frame of her mountain dwelling and saw she must travel to the city.

"Good–bye, my dears," she whispered, her tears creating mud as they washed down her sagging face, collected in wrinkles, puddled in the concentric grooves of her collar bone. Her wooden chair and table rattled, her black–bellied pot tipped its lid. Even the mossy floor, always so placid beneath her, heaved with verdant grief.

The summer before last, she had collected coarse goat's fleece that clung to the brambles like swaying cocoons and woven herself a fine, shaggy blanket. Now, it stretched out before her, an invitation to serve, so she filled it with sturdy red branches of mahogany, her tip–bent knife, and an old tarnished locket someone once had once given her in payment for prayers.

With the soles of her broad, dark feet tougher than rawhide and her legs slightly bowed, she ambled down the mountain side, coming in time to the dazzling city that sprawled before her.

Automobiles crawled through swelling white streets, hurrying pedestrians braced themselves and bent toward slippery cold pavements. Madonna Rosa stood for a moment like a frozen tree, drinking in these busy spectacles, then turned open–faced to the sky, for it was there, she knew, she would find what she needed.
A black crow, gliding like a feathered arrow, led Madonna Rosa to the centre of the city. Stately buildings, full of self-importance, surrounded her, and she dropped her goat's fleece bundle where she stopped, beside a sanitation bin under the sagging canopy of a small, neglected shop.

Boards barred the windows and doorway, sharp splinters of glass sprinkled the snow. Madonna Rosa extended her palm, holding it, for a moment, like a level in the air as wind embroidered her fingers.

Under the snow and glass, her hand burrowed, finding at last a wooden stake as stiff and strong as moonshine and a stone as smooth as gold. Using these tools, she freed the plywood barricade at the shop's door and entered the building as if it were her accustomed way.

All around was crumbling and littered. Cobwebs dangled like rope nets from the ceilings. Broken bottles, brick, bloated plasterboard, all mingled in a visual cacophony of ruin.

Madonna Rosa collected sheets of discarded newspaper that curled against the walls like carpets, tore them into strips, tied them with old shoestring, and joined them to a branch that fell from her bundle. She swept the shop from floor to ceiling, accumulating mounds of debris and salvaging limping spiders who crawled to her hands for comfort.

Outside, the wind howled. Madonna Rosa stacked the contents of her bundle in a corner, smoothed her goat's fleece blanket on the floor and rested awhile as the night unrolled its dark cape the length of the city.
Street noises serenaded Madonna Rosa as she slept, filling her dreams with the most exotic movements: simple mountain birds no longer chirped but squealed and honked, black bears shrieked drunken obscenities, then exploded into swelling clouds.

Madonna Rosa trudged down from the mountain again and again, coming to the abandoned shop, making of it a humble resting place, planting in the earth around her legions of shining seeds that dropped from her ragged pockets as if she herself were a tree.

In the morning when she woke, warm sun spilled through the splintering cracks of the boarded shop windows. The wind relinquished its grief. The world beyond her dripped its thawing icicles, and Madonna Rosa stood and nodded, for she had summoned spring.

She set a crate outside the store front to sit upon, brought some wood and her tip-bent knife, and whittled as she watched thin veils of ice transform to water at her feet.

People bustled by scarcely seeing, but Madonna Rosa continued carving. Often she chattered to herself, to the objects of her creation, and occasionally, lifting her wide, toothless mouth, greeted passing strangers as if they were old friends.

Her hands concealed the tiny creatures as she freed them from wood. Birds of all description, white-tailed deer, coons and cougars flourished, surrounding her and her lopsided crate.

Each day she resumed, and the days grew increasingly bright. Snow melted to reveal apartment window boxes dense with the promise
of tulips, and fanning malls announced the winter's end with banners longer than city blocks.

Evenings, Madonna Rosa stood and stretched her thick, gnarled fingers, ordered her multiplying menagerie to stand guard, and paced the twining city streets in search of food. She ate scraps in old twisted lunch bags and retrieved cartons from city bins. Fast food alley offerings of burgers and fries she gathered like blackberries into her skirt and carried back to the thin rodents who shared her city dwelling.

The selfless wooden beasts whom Madonna Rosa had brought into being never partook of her gifts, no matter how she enticed them. They guarded the shop like a host of chiselled angels, daring only the occasional movement, which Madonna Rosa caught with her sharp eyes. At night, when Madonna Rosa's dreams revealed all possibilities, they crawled and leapt and cantered in the folds of her skirt, foraged under her elbows' knobbly curves, soared past her sleeping head. By morning, the whole of her tingled and shone from spinning hooves. Her coarse hair twisted and coiled like snakes. The beasts resumed their solid vigil, and Madonna Rosa shrieked, delighted with their ability to play.

As spring opened to summer and days became longer than nights, tourists with wallets bulging in their pockets began to traverse the thoroughfare where Madonna Rosa made her home, and few could resist stopping and offering money for her tiny creations.

"Such charming little carvings," they would say, "and what an eccentric old woman."
But when Madonna Rosa smiled her shameless smile and shook her ancient head refusing to part with her treasures, then the tourists called her "crazy" and pulled their children away from her menagerie.

Madonna Rosa's knife blade clicked. She hummed and laughed and spoke to herself, and rocked back and forth on her crate.

Tourists crawled back to hotel rooms. People who worked in the city by day slunk sleepily home to their beds. The flaming moon rose and danced in the sky like a gypsy, and then Madonna Rosa took to the streets.

Stray dogs and cats escorted her, the starry night unrolled a glittering path. Madonna Rosa took only what was meant for her, then ambled back to her broken-down shop, preparing herself for a night of visions.

And then one night, as her playful beasts frolicked in and on the creases of her dreams, a hunter came in a red plaid shirt with a gun swinging at his side.

"Go away," Madonna Rosa told him, "the beasts are not for sale." Her toothless mouth turned slack, her cheerful eyes filled with poison, and when the hunter refused to leave, pointing his gun toward her skittering beasts, Madonna Rosa leapt at him, her brittle nails extended.

The following morning went poorly for Madonna Rosa. The branches she tried to carve split and cracked like worn seams and disgruntled tourists commented unkindly.

"Crazy old bitch ought to be locked away."
The wooden animals subdued their growls, Madonna Rosa dragged her swaying crate indoors, the rats and mice sniffed the sombre air and fled as if they sensed a natural disaster.

Madonna Rosa bent and shook her worried head. "The hunter," she muttered, grabbing the objects of her creation, pushing them into any crumbling plaster holes or apertures she could find.

On the dusty floor, she wrapped herself tightly in her blanket, pulling the covers under and in, creating a soft pouch where she could remain invisible. Yet, in sleep, the hunter found her again and again, at first arriving alone through swelling thickets of sound, then gradually, increasing his number as Madonna Rosa struggled against him.

Armies of plaid-coated hunters stormed Madonna Rosa's shop, kicking in wooden barricades, knocking through brick. The small beasts huddled and shivered in frozen hiding places while Madonna Rosa fought valiantly with her tip-bent knife.

For seven days Madonna Rosa continued to resist—her weak, emaciated body, growing feverishly hot as she sliced at hunters, who dropped in and out of her dreams like dangerous comets.

And then, on the eighth day, a tourist walking past her shop overheard the muffled screams. Police and paramedics were summoned, and Madonna Rosa found and taken away.

"But the animals," she cried, clutching the sleeves of the men who hoped to save her, trying in vain to find her little treasures in the folds of her skirt.
She could make no one understand. Dry tears stuck in her eyes. A needle was inserted in her hand, fluid pushed through her parched body.

"The hunters will kill them," she told the nurses and doctors, and she struggled against them to be free.

They took her knife, put her in a locked room, forced drugs and tubes into her body, but she continued to wail and fight, for she could not ignore the frightened beasts so far from her who still cried loudly in despair.

"Don't you hear?" she asked the shadows on her wall, but the shadows stood mute, as the cries of her animals seemed to fill the world with grief.

After some time, when Madonna Rosa no longer wept and her mind was numb with medicine, she was allowed to walk the corridors of the hospital in her long, blue robe and paper slippers.

She heard the cries still—coldly distant, frightened, disengaged—as doctors and nurses nodded, as patients writhed in the night, as the world turned a somersault and leaves as dead as bone tapped caged windows like metronomes. Pelting rain dug holes in the earth, filled stifled troughs, overflowed into fields once scorched by summer. And brightly charged hospital hallways hummed with artificial light.

In the lounge, tables overflowed with bounty for the psychiatric patients: fresh cut sandwiches, muffins, scones, none of which Madonna Rosa took.
She walked slowly in circles, paced and swayed in alternating designs, and soon the others knew who she was, followed in her path, and called for her healing.

Sounds bubbled and churned in her throat, her limp hands fell upon the heads and shoulders of those who reached to touch her gown, absorbing their suffering as a shield, yet still the hunters stalked.

"Go away," Madonna Rosa screamed, and needles swiftly jabbed her veins, dimness gave way to dark, and hunters, swarms and swarms of hunters, crawled down from porous ceilings, trampling her helpless body and wounding her flesh.

The doctors and nurses could not see the bullet holes where rusty streams of blood began. They could not understand her wild, raging terror, her obscene, aching groans. Other patients crowded outside, watching the stain of her blood seep beyond the door of her room, wash down the corridor.

"Save her!" one woman demanded, and then the others demanded also and shouted and thumped at her locked door until all the hospital security staff assembled.

Madonna Rosa bled, and the blood covered the floor, splashing high on the walls, oozing through window cracks and dripping off bars.

Her body was dropping away, turning liquid, and her mind closing. The persistent thumping outside the locked door, which she comprehended only vaguely at first, now filled her soul with a burst of sudden joy. The snorting and growling and cawing, the swelling dust,
beating life open, released her stampede of wooden animals, who roared into her room in a cloud of dancing thunder.

They nuzzled and licked her dry, aching face, leapt happily into the purple folds of her blood-soaked gown. Wasting no time Madonna Rosa gathered them up in her arms, discarded her failing body, and scaled the mountain she had come from almost a year before.

The next incarnation of this dark feminine figure came in my story (2000) "The Conferment." Hoping to find further illuminations of her nature, I decided to shift the focus I had established in the preceding stories by providing a first-person narrator. Previously I had used omniscient narrators. The narration in those earlier stories achieved a kind of fairy-tale effect, in which the reader, while perhaps feeling the symbolic power and wisdom of the dark feminine, still would sense an alienation from her “insane” ways of perceiving. In the following story, however, the first-person narration concretizes the dark feminine in a realism that does not necessarily pit the reader’s rational consciousness against the dark feminine’s “irrational” nature. Here, I discovered that the first-person narrator symbolically takes up the position of ego consciousness in the process of individuation. Like the ego, the narrator is both witness and participant in the transformative features of the dark feminine unconscious.

As in the other two stories, the main character’s name, Riparian, was supplied by the unconscious. Besides being the adjectival form of “riverbank,” with its dark and moist feminine implications, I became aware also of the homophonic connection of this name with the word, “repair.” In this story, the outlandish aunt, who straddles both mortal and immortal worlds, arrives at the door of the narrator’s staid suburban childhood home both as participant and tutor of magical feminine divinity. The narrator sees Riparian as something she conjures from within, something that is instinctually a part of her, but something from which she has been alienated. Interestingly, Riparian gains access to the house through the kind of materialistic misconceptions that are reminiscent of the one-sided alchemical biases discussed earlier. The narrator’s parents invite Riparian to stay because, like the alchemists who dismissed the feminine path, they seek material wealth. Riparian’s worth, however, does not exist in monetary or materialistic forms, but rather in
the imaginative and transformational qualities she can endow. In Creative Writing pedagogy and practice, we might extrapolate an analogous approach. The voiceless feminine, when re-voiced in our discipline, needs to be heard and discerned and incorporated into our thinking, not merely as a quality that will increase the value of the literary product, but as one that will evolve both individual and collective consciousness.
The Conferment

The sun left the sky, and crazy blackbird clouds flew out of the dust. They hovered just south of the subdivision, and it seemed for a time we would have to abandon our homes, but then the clouds changed course, and the newscasters announced there was no longer any danger.

My mother and the housekeeper ambled about all morning and afternoon packing, then unpacking, valuables. I remained in my room a prisoner watching the street and its parading debris from my window. I recall somersaulting leaves and flowers, lids of garbage cans twirling like dancers' skirts, and feelings of envy and exhilaration as twigs and bullets of hail lashed our house.

While roof shingles rattled and patio furniture tumbled drunkenly over hedges, Riparian was forming in my mind. She had existed before my birth, before the birth of my parents, whose grandparents so many years before even this had excluded her, and I recalled the first time I heard her name, how it spilled into the tiny nursery where I played, floating like the smell of sour milk throughout the house. I carried it in my bones, felt it stretch and lengthen and turn thick and grow. It stayed with me until the day she drove up our street in a yellow taxi, arrived at our door, "A spot of trouble in Bermuda," she told my mother. "Things have suddenly become awkwardish."

Mother paid the driver. The housekeeper dragged Riparian's overstuffed suitcase into the guest room. Father was summoned from his office.
My mother's snarl was hushed. Yet Riparian, or Auntie Rip as she made me call her when no one was around and she'd taken down the old British elocution and dropped her skin a stitch, knew she was not a welcome guest.

"They think I'm filthy rich," she'd snort and cackle, "but only half that equation's true." She'd sprawl on her bed, dark and naked, one broad muddy foot hitched over a knee.

My parents buzzed like summer insects all over the house that year. In closets and other unlikely places, their suppressed voices dancing and duelling: "When is she going to leave? What are we going to do with her?" My mother was always the sharpest. My father never had answers. But Auntie Rip was rooted and wasn't about to leave. She slept until noon, took luncheon in the courtyard, drank Velvet Hammers compulsively in daylight and smoked like a forest ablaze. Evenings, after three helpings of dinner, she slid gaily up the front stairs to her room, removed her prim, white gloves at the threshold and gave an obligatory affect-laden yawn.

When I heard her door shut I'd sneak across the hall, follow traces of her wild violet cologne. She'd be unpinning her hair, patting her face. "This weather sure makes things stick," she'd complain. "Come give your old Auntie Rip a hand, honey." And I'd help pry her face loose, so she could hang it on the peg behind the door, and unbuckle the skin at the top of her head so it would fall all in one, a wrinkled sack around her ankles.
"It sure feels good to breathe," she'd sing, and her voice was so rich I could feel it echo in my stomach. She reminded me of the midnight sky, her darkness swirled and shifted nebulously, and I followed her movements with my eyes until she told me to quit gawking, and she folded me lovingly into herself, a warm, graceful river.

By day, we kept our distance, avoiding any show of contact, yet I couldn't help watching Riparian in her flowered dresses and full-brimmed hats. I couldn't stop myself from searching for the darkness peeking from her ancient face.

She was a story to be entered, and within her, I lived unimaginable lives, moments infinitely bound to all time. She laughed at my wonder, my serious surprise, "Don't they teach you anything at school?" she said tickling me with ripples, pouring fountains of pictures through my mind.

But sometimes, she would stop her playful motions and murmur sad observations about the world. Tidal waves of grief would swell over her rich, impenetrable blackness, turning it bleak, flat, ordinary and inescapable.

The more time I spent with Riparian, the less I could sit attending the tasks others deemed useful. I heard my mother's discontent and annoyance, for she blamed Riparian for this change in my nature, though she had no idea of our bond. Father stayed calm, imagining a tremendous inheritance. Nothing was done about Riparian. She remained, in daylight, tied up and removed like a bundle of laundry in her lily-white
flesh, sipping Velvet Hammers in the courtyard, while at night we proceeded to meet, our alliance increasing, growing ever strong.

And then, one evening, as stories tore through me like comets, I found myself approaching Riparian's glowing centre, round and hot as molten gold, with a single fissure extending jagged like a split world.

I swam here, like a weary minnow trying to weave its way free from a fast, evaporating pool, no longer hearing Riparian's voice, nor seeing the images she projected. I swam back and forth, frantic, small, alone, and when I reached the ends of the chasm, joined the golden edges with a single nervous kiss.

Riparian sat on the bed across from me when I emerged. The sun of a new morning spilled into her room. I noticed tears of relief transforming to diamonds on her cheeks, and her broad, open hands grazed my face and hair, tugging at the top of my head, pulling something free.

My skin fell away like a shroud, and I saw underneath my own electric darkness. Riparian and I walked towards the courtyard, our cloudy dimness shadowing the tumbling tea tray the housekeeper had just finished polishing.

My parents gazed in disbelief, while Riparian and I twisted day into darkness, pulled a cyclone from the earth like a snake from a basket, and made the entire subdivision of my childhood vanish forever in one breath of raucous laughter.
In the resolution of "The Conferment," the narrator sacrifices the "subdivision of childhood"—what we might symbolically read as that partitioning of the self—in order to mature psychologically and embrace a larger creative center. This parallels the process of individuation, in that the old psyche is forever being forfeited to accommodate new consciousness. The dark feminine continually destroys the old arrangement in order to bring about a larger pallet from which to draw upon.

The destructive aspect of the dark feminine arises in all three stories. As Whitmont (1982) suggests in Return of the Goddess, this destructive aspect for "patriarchal consciousness" is frightening. "We believe in order, reason and progress and assign change, destruction, and transformation to the unconscious. We prefer not to look too closely at the awesomely dissolving and destructive, yet also dangerously attractive, abyss of the dark side of the goddess. Hence, of the vast range of feminine qualities [only a few are] acceptable to the patriarchal ego" (pp. 136-136).

In Creative Writing classrooms and workshops, the fear of the dark feminine manifests itself in the insistence that the ego is the creator as well as in the resistance to acknowledge and support the role of the unconscious in the writing process. For Creative Writing students, encountering the dark and voiceless feminine as any manifestation of unconscious contents (dream image, for example, or psychic projection) can be extremely potent. It can elicit strong emotions and strong spontaneous reactions and responses, which instructors may find difficult to deal with, particularly if they themselves have not touched these inner reaches. On the other hand, engaging with the dark feminine allows students a richly creative and transformational experience in which they can discover that both expression and knowledge are born through the dialogue of ego consciousness and the unconscious, rather than simply though a monologue of the ego’s intent. By positioning the ego as scribe and midwife for the unconscious, the student writer not only learns to translate the language of the unconscious, but also to trust its creative guidance. Ultimately, the work one produces, when re-voicing the voiceless feminine, is work that expands beyond the ego’s known terrain into places that are just becoming known and beyond, into the dark forests awaiting illumination.
Concluding Remarks

The preceding pages lay out a Jungian approach to Creative Writing teaching, an approach whose primary tenet is the equal acknowledgement of the archetypal masculine and feminine and the importance of their co-operative interaction. I have expanded on these two archetypal energies, identified in the psyche of all humans, and shown how the “feminine” has been socially and culturally ignored, undervalued, and misunderstood. I have attempted to show how this neglect, generally reflected in current teaching methods of Creative Writing, is a potential obstacle to student writers in trying to reach their full potential.

Typically, student writers in conventional Creative Writing classes are not encouraged to establish a dialogue between their limited ego consciousness and the expansive terrain of the unconscious. They have been taught to rely on external form and formula and are given little encouragement to gain trust or confidence in inner resources. By familiarising students with Jungian concepts and their application in Creative Writing, as outlined here, instructors will be able to begin assisting them in laying the foundations of meaningful and psychically resonant work, not just work that is well-crafted and technically brilliant.

In this study, I have moved from broad definitions, both psychoanalytic and literary, to the minutiae of specific practical approaches and illustrations. What I have offered is not an all-encompassing system, but rather a sampling of concepts and applications as I have worked with them in my own teaching and writing. This sampling represents only the most meagre beginnings of what may develop, over time, into a more widespread acceptance of the importance of the inner world, the unconscious, the psyche, and the archetypal feminine, in the teaching of Creative Writing.
Notes

1 Jung frequently expressed the psyche as fixed by gender; however, "key areas of his psychology combat such a straightforward definition" (Rowland, 2000, p.39). We will be discussing this in greater depth in Chapter Three with a consideration of Jung's conceptions of anima and animus.

2 C. H. Knoblauch and Lillian Brannon (1984) in their critique of current teaching methods in writing present an historical perspective that can be directly related to an archetypal masculine and feminine understanding of Creative Writing pedagogy. They point out that "composition"—with its historic and theoretical roots in "an esoteric discipline called 'rhetoric,' which long ago disappeared from the standard academic curriculum" (p.3)—continues to dominate our teaching methods in writing. "Over the past 400 years, however, profound reorientations in Western epistemology—that is, views of the nature of knowledge and the relationship between knowledge and discourse—have caused a gradual erosion of ancient belief and, with it, a repudiation of the classical rhetorical concepts on which many people continue to depend in their teaching. Modern rhetorical theory, beginning as early as the seventeenth century, finds a closer connection between language and thought, discourse and knowledge, than ancient speculation had supposed. Far from serving an optional, ceremonial function, composition—the forming process at the heart of writing—is essentially related to learning, to the individual's personal search for coherence in experience. It is also, as a manifestation of human symbolic capacities, a natural endowment in essence, not a technical skill. The competence to use language to make meaning develops with application, according to modern theory, and is therefore nurtured rather than 'taught.' Progress toward excellence is a function of increasing experience more than objective understanding of principles" (p. 4). What the authors delineate in this passage, though they do not label it as such, is a movement of human consciousness towards a new perspective that is inclusive of the archetypal feminine. While this consciousness begins to takes shape in our lives and our psyches, we remain stuck in the old archetypal masculine patterns, searching for ways to assist in bringing it to light. We find, however, that there is a growing disparity between what our enlarging consciousness presents to us in terms of the truth of our observations about the writing process and the teaching methods we have inherited to facilitate this process. These methods "are flawed because they do not accord with the evidence of observation and because they are rooted in an epistemology which is itself insufficient" (p. 18). This development of collective consciousness works similarly on the individual level. Emerging consciousness always presents disparity to the ego and causes a rupture in stable knowledge before it can be integrated and made functional. What the authors of this work wrestle with is the challenge of the integration of the emerging feminine principle in writing education.

3 I am suggesting here that a major goal of Creative Writing instruction is to produce exceptional writers. This is an opinion, I am aware, with which not all would agree. D.G. Myers (1996) in his historical survey of Creative Writing, *The Elephants Teach*, points out that the goals of Creative Writing courses and programs have not remained consistent over time, and never has the goal been one of producing great literary artists. "The history of creative writing since the Second World War has been the history of its development into what American industry calls an 'elephant machine'—a machine for creating more Creative Writing programs. As early as 1964, Allen Tate warned that 'the academically certified Creative Writer goes out to teach Creative Writing, and produces other Creative Writers who are not writers, but who produce still other Creative Writers who are not writers.'" (p. 146). Robie Macauley (1973) suggests that a major goal of Creative Writing classes is to make "sensitive readers" and to create an "audience" for that 1% of Creative Writing students who actually become publishable authors (Conference on Teaching Creative Writing, p. 74). It is both my experience and contention that the majority of student writers do not select programs in Creative Writing in order to become "sensitive readers" or instructors of Creative Writing. The majority of those who enter Creative Writing programs do so, I believe, in order to become literary artists.

4 According to Andrew Samuels (1985) in his work *Jung and the Post Jungians*, Jung was influenced by both Plato and Kant in his development of an archetypal theory, but Jung credits Schopenhauer most directly. "Schopenhauer wrote of 'prototypes' or archetypes as 'the original forms of all things [which] alone can be said to have true being, because they always are, but never become nor pass away.'" (p.24). Jung (1959) cites the term as occurring "as early as Philo Judaeus, with reference to the *Imago Dei* (God-
John Gardner (1983) in *The Art of Fiction* also disparages this advice. He writes: “Nothing can be more
limiting to the imagination, nothing is quicker to turn on the psyche’s censoring devices and distortion
systems, than trying to write about what one knows” (p. 18). However, his alternate advice may be equally
limiting: “write the kind of story you know and like the best.” This is because Gardner still holds a
technical bias, believing that the “artist’s primary unit of thought—his primary conscious or unconscious
basis for selecting and organizing the details of his work—is the genre” (p. 18). Gardner, as so many other
Creative Writing author-instructors, does not acknowledge the need of the unconscious to express itself.

Philip K. Jason and Allan B. Lefcowitz (1999) deal with writers learning to “present the ordinary in a vital
way” (p. 80). This discussion takes place in the context of “originality” in writing, where they assure the
aspiring writer that “Your fresh vision... will come from the unique combination that is you, but only so
long as you have studied, thought deeply about, and responded honestly to your material” (pp. 80-81). They
do not, however, advise students how to go about doing these things. How does one “study” one’s
material? Surely, it is not done in the conventional way one might study for a quiz. And what exactly is
meant by “thinking deeply” and “responding with honesty?” These abstractions point students away from
the precipice of “technique-only,” but frustratingly do not provide any other solid counsel. Students are
either expected to know already how to do the inner transformational work required, or such is left for the
future, in the educational cliché that the external world and life experience will tutor the student writer
better than any classroom experience can. Watts (1996) considers “The personality of the writer” and tells
us that writers develop an “artistic relationship” with the world. He uses definitions of creativity in order to
“come close” to what characterizes this relationship. Ultimately, he says that the “artist is a person who
relates to the world in a new way” (p. 137). He adds that seeing the world in a new way directly relates to
“aesthetic judgement,” which has to do with a writer’s “depth of personality.” He concludes: “We are in
very misty territory indeed now, and there are no answers to the questions this raises. What is depth of
personality? Can we deepen ourselves? Are some of us doomed to be perpetually shallow?”(p. 137).
Although Watts does not think these questions can be answered definitively he presents his personal belief that everyone can deepen. He does not, however, give any guidance on how this is to be achieved. Knight (1981) also believes that the writer must perceive the world in a new way and provides
student writers with a number of exercises to assist them in this task. He suggests, for example, “go and
look at some living thing—a bush, a sleeping dog, a spider in her web—and keep looking until you feel you
know something about it that you didn’t know before. (If the thing you pick turns out not to be saying
anything to you, try another one.) Now write a paragraph about it, trying to express that understanding in
words. When you are done, you may have transformed your own image of the thing you looked at; it will
never again be as uninteresting as it was before” (p. 17). While such an exercise might promote a new and
original perspective for a student writer, it also might simply become an opportunity to entertain another
cliché. Transforming one’s consciousness, becoming aware of new and original perspectives, deepening
one’s consciousness through a capacity to reflect upon and enlarge one’s consciousness—all of these things
are required of the writer, but current approaches to Creative Writing education do not discuss realistic
ways for student writers to do this.

David Rosen (2004) is an analyst author who believes that art can indeed be the product of active
imagination. He writes in *The healing spirit of Haiku* that “haiku fits well with Carl Jung’s
psychotherapeutic technique of active imagination in which meditation leads to setting ego aside so the
unconscious can emerge and be integrated with the conscious in a transcendental function resulting in an
artistic product” (p.2). He sees “creative haiku” as representing “a healing union of intuition and sensation,
past and present, self and other, ordinary and extraordinary” (p.2). I believe this can also be said of the vast
majority of creative literary forms.

Oakley Hall (1989) outlines these components as “characterization techniques” along with five others,
including “narrative voice,” “thoughts,” “setting, tastes, interests, etc.,” “gestures and mannerisms,” and
“action,” which can be collapsed into these broader categories (p.38).

Information provided by author from memory.
Jung (1982) noted that the Virgin Mary was the “Christian version of the mother archetype” divested of all her “Olympian qualities except for her brightness, goodness, and eternality.... Even her human body, the thing most prone to gross material corruption, has put on an ethereal incorruptibility” (p. 137). “What has become of the characteristic relation of the mother-image to the earth, darkness, the abysmal side of the bodily man with his animal passions and instinctual nature, and to ‘matter’ in general?” he asks. He sees the dogma of the Assumption of Mary coming “at a time when the achievements of science and technology, combined with a rationalistic and materialistic view of the world, threaten the spiritual and psychic heritage of man with instant annihilation” (pp. 137-138). The splitting of the mother archetype, with the Mother of God being enthroned in heaven, he sees, as taking “up a counter position to the titanic forces of the earth and the underworld that have been unleashed.” Just as Mary “was divested of all the essential qualities of materiality, matter became completely de-souled.” Jung writes that “when a figure that is conditioned by this archetype is represented as having been taken up into heaven, the realm of the spirit, this indicates a union of earth and heaven, or of matter and spirit. The approach of natural science will almost certainly be from the other directions: it will see in matter itself the equivalent of spirit, but this ‘spirit’ will appear divested of all, or at any rate most, of its known qualities, just as early matter was stripped of its specific characteristics when it staged its entry into heaven” (p. 138). Again, these observations discuss the lack of a natural balance between matter and spirit, earth and heaven, feminine and masculine, and provide us with further areas of exploration of the voiceless feminine.
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