

Book Review

Transformative Teaching: Promoting Transformation through Literature, the Arts, and Jungian Psychology, by Darrell Dobson, SensePublishers, 2008, ISBN 978908790417

and

Education and Imagination: Post-Jungian Perspectives, edited by Raya A. Jones, Austin Clarkson, Sue Congram, and Nick Stratton, Routledge, 2008, ISBN 9780415432590

Reviewed by Susan Rowland, Ph.D.

University of Greenwich

When writing about the cultural history of his therapy, Jung called “education” and “transformation” two stages in the individuation process (Jung 1933: 31). By this he did not mean that analytical psychology would include traditional forms of teaching. Rather he was stressing that the *newness of* analytic practice in the twentieth century was building on far older modes of psychic growth, such as religious confession and the moulding of youth.

Today one question facing the growing diversity of Jungian studies is the relationship between the practices of therapy according to Jung’s notion of the psyche and the possibility of extending the benefits of such treatment into “other” settings. On the one hand, the possibility of opening up more collective areas of society, such as the school classroom, to the potentials for psychic flourishing is an enormous prize to those who, like Jung, believe that the healing of whole societies is an urgent task if global problems are to be addressed. Jung believed that modernity was sick because it had excluded so much that was “other.” He cannot have believed that one-to-one analysis would be the sole solution.

On the other hand, educators are not therapists, nor should they try to be, as all these authors fully acknowledge. So it is a delight to discover two volumes where the subject of “Jung and education” is treated in such depth as to offer creativity, strategies, and hope to all who labor in the education establishments of schools, colleges, and work-based learning. All participants here are adamant that the teacher is no analyst. However, Darrell Dobson’s sustained study, *Transformative Teaching*, explores an invaluable concept for teachers, the archetype of the teacher-

learner, discussed in his book by Austin Clarkson and taken from Guggenbuhl-Craig's 1971 *Power in the Helping Professions* (Spring). Here teaching works as a creative and containing dynamic around the notion that the teacher contains an inner learner and the student and inner teacher. Dobson's book is about teachers and about how gaining access to transformative learning methods, through adapting Jung's principles, enables personal growth and Self-development, and vice versa.

Transformative Teaching focuses on four remarkable educators: Ann Yeoman, a Jungian analyst teaching literature through archetypal interpretation at college; Austin Clarkson, an academic and musicologist who has devised a powerful short course on creativity for young school children; and "Lily," a pseudonym for a high school teacher struggling with institutional demand who yet manages, with the psychic growth of her students, to reach a sense of herself as teacher-artist. Bravely and Jungianly, the fourth teacher engaged in self-reflection is Dobson himself. One of the fascinating and enriching aspects of this book is the complex emergence of what might be called the "wounded teacher," after the ubiquitous wounded healer. Dobson portrays a troubled childhood in a difficult family followed by the impulse to rebel negatively as many teenagers do. Some of these teenagers meet wise teachers who know how to structure a creative outlet for what appears to be a suffocating shadow. Fortunate to experience such a high school teacher who could foster his fragile maturity, Dobson shows in this candid and perceptive account how he has striven to offer a similar transforming capacity to his students through arts practice.

By then amplifying his own professional story through the three others, Dobson provides deeply persuasive qualitative evidence for the value of teaching through appealing to the nascent Self of the students. *Transformative Teaching* is a very satisfying work that ought to be compulsory reading for all student teachers. In particular, its dialogical perspective, inherent in Jung, that developing the student means strengthening the psyche of the teacher, is a necessary building up of hope. The book tells us that exposing talents of the class means psychic engagement. This can be achieved safely and pleasurably through the arts and myth. The result liberates creativity in students and teacher alike. Institutions need to become places that invite the whole Self in, not lock it out.

By contrast, *Education and Imagination* is a rich and varied collection of essays linked by learning as a theme rather than an institutional practice. Yet, here too, there is interesting overlap with Dobson's transformative teaching. In this book, Dobson contributes a reflection upon his research, and Clarkson gives a detailed account of the methods and results of his "Exploring Creativity in Depth" program with schoolchildren, only briefly described in the other book. Here too, some of the historic assumptions of educational theory are questioned.

For example, Terence Dawson's masterly study of educational ideas in Rousseau's *Emile* offers a third and new educational principle from that seminal

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work: that the child's ego should be nurtured in the early years rather than the persona. He points out that *Emile* seems to show the dangers of a young child acquiring a bloated persona by being exposed to predatory capitalism and hypnotic social conventions too soon. Similarly, in an essay that should be a standard work in all teaching of creative writing, Madeline Sonik proves, contrary to popular belief, that creativity *can* be taught. A Jungian approach to the psyche enables students of creative writing to be freed from the anxieties and limitations of their own egos.

Raya A. Jones contributes a wonderfully scholarly piece on narrative and fairy tales. One Jungian work with some circulation in universities is Marie-Louise von Franz's book on fairy tales. Jones shows how the nuances of the Jungian approach are often missed and how they can be worked into other scholarship on narrating as educating. Ultimately the Jungian diagnosis of fairy tales can be blended into pedagogical discourse. Meanwhile, Sue Congram describes an exciting course for women aspiring to senior positions in management through imaginative techniques ranging from poetry and dance to masks and creative writing. All this is woven into the building of an innovative management project so that psyche-work is deeply implicated in the "real-world" achievement.

Also, Nick Stratton takes the debate about Jungian techniques in the education world into another dimension by experimenting with learning software. By long study of Jung and a wealth of knowledge from a career in educational psychology, Stratton has created software Learning Assistants in the modes of Guard, Mirror, Guide, and Joker. Any resemblances to shadow, persona, anima, and trickster are entirely intentional. A particular delight of Stratton's essay is the honest and self-reflective depiction of the research and trial process. In fact, it exemplifies the relationship between "quest" and "question" that Dobson chooses to conclude his study of a process that, as with individuation, never actually ends. In choosing the Grail quest of Perceval as the motif for the generation of his transformative teaching, Dobson's realization could stand for the illumination provided by both books.

The words "question" and "quest" are similar; the questions and the quest are similar. The lived and embodied questions are the quest. What is it that ails you? Whom does the Grail, now understood as the quest, serve? It serves the ongoing process of further realizing the innermost Self. The wound that will not heal is healed by living these questions. (Dobson 216)

In education, the question is the quest. I think that the reliving of myth in service of mutual individuation, which is ultimately a commitment to healing the world, is one that all these authors would recognize. For they have made it their

own. Indeed, we could try to amplify Dobson's work here and say that the *question* of how to take Jungian powers of creativity and healing into the world is the *quest* of Jungian studies today. Educators and teachers of the creative psyche know so well their wounds from a harsh world. As wounded teachers they try every day to embody the grail for the sake of the Waste Land.

WORKS CITED

Jung, C. G. *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. London: Routledge, 1933.