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The Development of the Individual Through Art Therapy

Catherine Wells-Ratcliffe

A Research Paper

in

The Department

of

Art Education and the Creative Arts Therapies

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for the Degree of Master of Arts

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## **Abstract**

### **The Development of the Individual Through Art Therapy**

**Catherine Wells-Ratcliffe**

It is the developed individual who will be happiest, healthiest and able to be who he or she was born capable to be. This paper looks at the philosophical and psychological background of the Western concept of the individual, specifically at the way it is explained by Freud, Jung, Winnicott, Rogers and Maslow. Art and the Individual have evolved together in Western Civilization from the Renaissance to postmodernism. It is the innate creative impulse in all human beings that leads to self-expression and individual growth. Development occurs when people make their own objects and images as “good-enough art”. Art therapy provides a safe, empathic relationship and space to do this, and is in a unique position to foster the inner psychological, creative and aesthetic life of individuals. Knowledge of how this life may authentically be expressed through art equips the art therapist to promote individual development. From a humanistic perspective, the paper concludes that a society comprised of well-developed individuals, able to express their inner lives creatively, will be more likely to be healthy, democratic and peaceful. At the same time, the mature individual will function better in society and in turn will contribute to the common good. The implication for our profession is that art therapy is well positioned to cultivate human development through the fostering and understanding of creative and symbolic representation of the inner life, as well as engendering respect for individual worth and humaneness in our world.

## **Dedication and Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Pierre Gregoire, my advisor, for supporting my research and encouraging my philosophical search for the individual, and dedicate this, the last thesis he has overseen due to his retirement, to him. His comments inspired me to look in directions I would not have thought of but, at the same time, he gave me free reign to look at my topic from my own individual perspective, only directing me to go to the source for some of my references where I found much more to interest me. I have discovered that I just scratched the surface of my topic. To continue what I started in this paper will be a lifelong project. As a good-enough advisor he accepted this work, letting it develop as a product of my own creativity and true self.

I would also like to thank the technicians at the Concordia MacLab for their expertise and patience in helping me with my pictures, and my teachers in the Creative Arts Therapies department for inspiring, encouraging and responding to my many questions throughout my studies.

Finally I would like to thank my husband, Ron Ratcliffe, for being my sounding board during the gestation process of this paper and for his generous and patient support while I was writing it. Many creative and stimulating conversations with him helped me collect, expand and formulate my thoughts.

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## Introduction

I shall study the concept of the health of the *individual*, because social health is dependent on individual health, society being but a massive reduplication of persons. Society cannot get further than the common denominator of individual health, and indeed cannot get so far, since society must carry its unhealthy members (Winnicott, 1986, p. 21-22).

Theorists, philosophers, and psychologists differ in the precision by which they define their concepts. Quantification allows for measuring and counting but is not necessarily closer to the truth of descriptions. Any level may be the appropriate one for one's objective. What finally matters is how deeply one penetrates to the core of what one is looking for. (Arnheim, 1996, p.168.)

At a time when there is a great pressure on art therapists to justify our profession and quantify clinical results, I have chosen to write a philosophically oriented paper. Some of the ideas that I present have intrigued me for many years. A conversation with a psychologist at my practicum site prompted me to write about them in my research paper. We were having a rather heated discussion about individual rights and group rights. As a small group leader whose aim was to help young children function socially, she passionately believed that the individual must sacrifice him/herself for the group. I knew then that I, with equal passion, believed something quite different: it is only the developed individual who could offer anything to a group, and no amount of conformity would make for a happy, fulfilled, healthy individual or successful and well functioning group. It was at about this time that a child from the preschool group we were both working with came to me for individual art therapy. His rather remarkable transformation further convinced me of my thesis and I will describe his case in chapter four to illustrate it. My experience with this child (and others), the conversation I recounted and my subsequent musings led me to research the background and the evolution of the philosophical and psychological ideas of the individual and individual development, specifically in relation to creativity and art, and the subsequent effect upon the individual and his/her relationships with others. My objective

is to apply my findings to my practice of art therapy.

Since the dawn of civilization, human beings have attempted to find meaning in existence and relief from its hardships. In the twelfth century in Europe (Campbell, 1968; 1988; Morris, 1972) this manifested itself in the "discovery of the individual" (Morris). Joseph Campbell (1968) believed that individuality is the great truth of Western civilization. Inspired by the humanism of classical antiquity, and expressed through the arts and literature, consciousness of this truth expanded during the Renaissance. Reason and emotion suffused it during the Enlightenment and the Romantic Age. The Modern Age fashioned it into a science, and in doing so, split it (like the atom). In those heady days, Freud, and then others, described the human mind and its parts. What had been expressed through art and philosophy now became a science. Social institutions broke up and the artists and writers transcribed the fragmentation. In the present, swiftly changing postmodern period the truth of the individual seems lost amid a surplus of ideas, theories and statistics; art and science are polarized. But at the same time, humanism continued to evolve and profess to those who would listen, regardless of social and cultural constraints, human worth and the truth of the individual. The human capacity to be creative continues to guide us on our quest for the truth.

Art and the individual have evolved together in Western civilization. Western art has acted as the vanguard of change, looking for and embracing new ideas that are provocative and stimulating, transforming the old and translating the new, abandoning the false and banal, embracing what is genuine and generative (Hughes, 1980) true and beautiful. Art therapy is in a prime position to support and effect individual development in our times. The art therapist understands psychic development and at the same time has a strong notion of cultural and aesthetic development. From the perspectives of art and psychology we can view creativity as the inherent human capacity for growth.

By selecting judiciously from the formidable amount of material on the individual and society, creativity and art, synthesizing it and presenting what I believe to be its significance for the practice of art therapy, I am endeavoring to point out how important it is for art therapists to remain in the vanguard, promoting individual dignity and rights: respecting and fostering the creative spirit in humanity and fulfilling the traditional role of

artists to discern and cultivate truth and beauty. The development of the individual through art therapy does, I believe, promote mental health, enhancing the ability of individuals to direct their own lives and tolerate life's uncertainties. I hope to encourage art therapists to use their unique skills to not only facilitate individual self-expression and development, but to see their work as an important aid in the healing of our society. And I want to add my voice to those who would lay to rest (Winnicott, Rogers, Saul, etc.) what I believe to be the misconception that focus on the individual leads to self-centredness. I am writing to give a tiny bit more weight to the premise that a mature individual will function better in society and in turn will contribute to society: one cannot evolve without the other.

What follows, for the sake of clarity, are working definitions of certain terms for the purposes of this paper.

*Individuality and individualism:* There has often been expressed a fear of rampant individualism in our society. Jung describes individualism as false and presumptuous but refers to the development of the personality as a conscious and moral choice towards wholeness and a faithfulness to the personal potential of one's humanity (1991). John Ralston Saul (2002) uses the terms "responsible individualism" (p.52) and "false individualism" (p. 179). In the former we develop our human qualities in order to contribute to society; in the latter we use society for selfish ends. In my reading, I have found that *individual*, *individuality*, *individualism* have many shades of meaning. When I use these terms, I will be referring to the potential and ability of the person to be who s/he is able to be, personally, creatively and morally; to describe positively the healthy expression of a person's true nature and humanity.

*Creativity; the original creative impulse; creative potential:* I believe that creativity or a creative potential exists equally for/in all of us. David Henley calls the ability to play and make special the original creative impulse (1999). It can be manifested in simple and complex ways, from an infant's play to the great work of a Shakespeare or a Picasso. It is that which guides and aids us in becoming who we are able to be. The argument is (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) that only some people are creative or that some - artistic geniuses - are much more creative than the rest. My feeling is that the capacity for genius lies

elsewhere, that it is a complex interweaving of intelligences (Gardner, 1992), natural abilities, life experience, education, opportunity, etc. But I am not writing to try to understand genius or the few, but rather to understand human potential and the many. The creative process may be accessed by all of us. Some are blessed with abilities and opportunities that, coupled with creativity, lead to genius, but we all may exercise creativity to develop what abilities and use what opportunities are ours.

It would seem, paradoxically, that often the creative process is animated when we are in difficult straits. Besides being something that helps us develop, it can help us when we are in distress - hence art therapy can address both self development and the resolution of difficulties and the alleviation of suffering through creative development (Moon 1990; Robbins, 1989). So, in this paper, creativity will mean the universal potential for originality, invention and growth that exists in all human beings.

*Development:* Winnicott (1988) says that human development at its best will equip us to be as close as possible to who we were born able to be. It is in the light of this remark that I will look at the development of the individual. I should say at the outset that I believe human evolution is a continuous process situated in a never ending past, present and future. I use such expansive language to try to evoke an understanding of the inborn and considerable creative capacity of human beings for developing rich, full, good lives and societies. In short, I will use the word development to describe personal growth and fulfillment of potential, not in terms of societal, psychological or biological norms.

*Humanism and corporatism:* Throughout this paper, I will discuss humanism, its influence and its changing face; how it simultaneously favours individual and societal development; how it fosters creativity; how humanism and the arts have contributed to and enriched each other, and the resulting implications for art therapy. Now and then, as its antithesis, I will mention *corporatism*. By it I mean a bureaucratic organization of society that doesn't particularly take into account reverence for individual rights, community and the universal precept of a shared humanity. As Saul (2002) describes, society cannot function without order, but "the art of living together" (p.12) requires its members to actively engage in the ongoing process of becoming fully human and humane.

I feel that art therapy has an important role to play in the development of the

individual and society because of its special ability to facilitate creative expression through art and its unique way of helping the individual express his/her inner life through symbolic representation. In certain organizations the expression of the individual is discouraged and can be downright dangerous. History has shown us that social, political and religious dissent can have disastrous outcomes for the dissenters. Rogers (1961) discusses how originality may be perceived as dangerous by the group. Many of our modern institutions appear to discourage individual thought and action. The question I am asking, then, centres on individual expression within the group. How can art therapy help individuals fulfill their creative potential and develop, and how will this creative development improve society? Am I suggesting that art therapy can change the world? Well, maybe. Responsible individualism can and has (Saul, 2002) and will continue to do so. Art therapy can at least step in at this stage in human evolution and contribute to the incontestably momentous task of engendering respect for individual worth and humaneness in our world.

I believe that is in within the sphere of Humanist philosophy that I will find what I am looking for.

## **Chapter 1 - Philosophy**

Just as a planet revolves around a central body as well as rotating on its own axis so the human individual takes part in the course of development of mankind at the same time as he pursues his own path in life. (Freud, 1989, p. 106).

In the earliest times, the quest for personal happiness and harmony in life was sought through the appeasement of that which had a direct and profound effect on people's lives: nature and her gods (Bloom & Baird, 1971). Thoughts of birth and death, sickness and old age, the hardships inflicted by natural phenomena, the preoccupation with acquiring and providing adequate food and shelter, and adapting to the conditions of their times must have filled the minds of our early ancestors. Ritualistic configurations of bones and rocks, cave drawings, and statues were created to give significance to them and the feelings they evoked. Images and objects helped them mediate their environment. Consciousness and meaning emerged in art and stories (Campbell, 1990).

### ***Eastern Philosophy***

Divination arose as a method of understanding and trying to gain control over natural occurrences. In China, the I Ching, in which Confucianism and Taoism had their roots (Bloom and Baird, 1971; Wilhelm, 1987), was characterized in its early form by the use of images to express concepts, gradually becoming more sophisticated to mirror the early evolution of self-realization and control over one's existence (Wilhelm, 1987). Confucianism arose in an age when powerful war lords brutalized the populace. Confucius pointed out, to those who would listen, that all men ought to have equal rights. What he felt the chief virtue to be was humaneness (jen), expressed further in the virtues of conscientious development of one's mind (chung) and altruistic expression of this developed mind (shu), thereby contemplating not just oneself but also the common good. (Bloom & Baird, 1971). Self-knowledge was valued not so much as a means of self-development but as that which enabled one to become a cultivated member of society (Munro, 1985). While Confucianism was based on harmonious human relations and offered a broad social mode of conduct, Taoism offered individuals a way to adapt to the conditions of their lives. Taoist philosophy attempted to align man with the cosmos and the

deep laws of nature - the source of all existence (Bloom & Baird, 1971). For the Taoist, self-development meant to recognize the universal Whole (Tao) in oneself (Munro, 1985).

In India, the concept of *dharma* expressed the idea of one's personal duty but at the same time was related to the Hindu caste system (Campbell, 1968). Personality evolved as one underwent study with a guru. But then the individual had to adhere to the dictates of the cult of a specific deity (Moore, 1968). Rhys Davids, a specialist in early Indian religious traditions, claims Gautama Buddha attempted to do away with superstition, saying that all is caused by events and personal reaction to them (Hutcheon, 2001). Through adherence to a moral code based on compassion and honesty, followers of the Buddha strove to develop themselves on what is called the *lesser journey*, in order to prepare themselves for the *greater journey* which lead them to enlightenment: consciousness, harmony and happiness (Cleary, 1995).

### ***Classical Antiquity***

In the classical tradition of ancient Greece, even though it was fatalistic, Homer provides for us, in his epic the *Odyssey*, images of the heroic journey of a human being becoming an individual (Moss, 2001). Socrates gave us the idea of the human psyche made healthy by the knowledge and love of the good: well-being depended upon human virtue, intelligence and character (Moss). He recounts how the gods gave society to human beings to ensure their survival, and gave human beings the qualities of virtue and reverence needed to make society work (Saul, 2002). Plato, searching for truth, beauty and goodness provided the human being with a glimpse of life as it ought to be lived. The neo-platonists, specifically Plotinus and Proclus, expanded this ideal to include the notion that individual human existence became a journey inward to discover these qualities within and thus be reunited with the essence of our origin - eternity (Moss). The Stoics, specifically Epictetus, felt that the individual human being could overcome fate and the tragedy of human life through self-discipline, reason and self-examination (Moss). The ancient Greeks gave us, in principle at least, democracy and humanism (Saul, 2002).

### ***Christianity***

Christ shifted the emphasis from reason and self-discipline to love, altruism, community and concern for the common good (Moss, 2001). Following Christ's example



we must die, metaphorically, and be reborn to a more fulfilling way of life (Campbell, 1988). Christ's teachings, although Eastern in origin, became a building block of Western European individualism. Voluntary engagement with the world came about not because of pressures outside the individual but because of the individual choice to be so engaged in a spirit of compassion (Campbell, 1988).

### ***Western concept of the individual***

Medieval Europe, in its interpretation of the teachings of Christ, produced the Grail legend, in which the Knights of the Round Table set off to search for the chalice that Christ used at the Last Supper. Each knight entered the forest on his own path to look for it in his own way (Campbell, 1968). "The Grail [is] ... that which is attained and realized by people who have lived their own lives, the Grail represents the fulfillment of the highest spiritual potentialities of the human consciousness" (Campbell, 1988, pp. 196 -197) or bliss (Campbell, 1988). Herein lies the foundation of the western concept of the individual. It began to spread by way of the troubadours in the 12th century who praised romantic love as a "person-to-person" (Campbell, 1988, p. 186) experience and not something to be dictated by religious, political and societal norms set up by the medieval Christian church. The choices of the heart instigated the social movement validating individual experience and choice which has become the cornerstone of Western civilization (Campbell, 1988). The social system of the Middle Ages gave way as human beings began to look to personal experience to gain an idea of what humanity and its values ought to be. "The most characteristic features of its approach may be summed up in the two expressions, 'self-discovery' and 'humanism'" (Morris, 1972, p. 158). In the twelfth century quest for the Individual, Socratic self-examination became almost an obsession (Saul, 1995). There are stories of individual choice in the East but they never engendered social change as did the medieval philosophy and tales of courtly love. No longer was the ideal that the individual sacrifice self for society, but rather that society respect and foster the individual (Campbell, 1988). At the same time, the impulses of the individual had to be curbed and modulated by respect for other individuals. The courtly ideal that was coupled with reverence for the individual was courtesy - consideration for others' individuality (Campbell, 1988).

### ***The Renaissance***

Western culture and individual expression flourished during the Renaissance. A rediscovery of ancient classical philosophy and art brought forth a renewed humanism after it had been set aside by the ecclesiastical and metaphysical systems of the Middle Ages (Moss, 2001; Gross, 2001). Although there had been classical revivals in the medieval times, it was with a new individualistic voice that Renaissance philosophers were able to call for a revival of the humanist philosophy of the ancients. Petrarch, “the father of Humanism” (Cassirer, Kristellat, & Randal, 1956, p. 3) called for a renewal of the integrity of ancient Greece and Rome (Jansen, 1986). A rekindled love of beauty and respect for and interest in individuality are manifest in Renaissance art, the product of a quickly evolving civilization (Beckett, 1994). “Humanity stepped once more to center stage as the focus of art and thought” (Cole & Gealt, 1989, p. 90) and people were no longer painted simply to depict social standing, as in the Middle Ages, but to portray realistic individuals in which subtle revelations of their inner life could be represented (Clark, 1970). Renaissance artists, Leonardo, Titian, Rembrandt, VanEyck, Carravaggio, among many others, depicted individuality in their own way, not as that which must be transcended in the Eastern sense, but valued, cherished and “brought to flower” (Campbell, 1988, p. 482; Clark).

By becoming more of an artist than a craftsman, more of an individual professional - what we now call self-employed - the Renaissance artist began to direct himself away from decoration and illustration, away from altarpieces and fresco styles, toward his newfound responsibility: the creation of his own space (Stella, 1986, p.5).

Carravaggio, in particular, changed forever how artists portrayed humanity, encompassing in his masterpieces both the glories and sordidness of human existence. In his art, human beings are felt to be real, and because of this, beautiful (Beckett, 1994; Stella).

Shakespeare and Cervantes revolutionized literature as they depicted our developing humanity in a “living mythology” (Campbell, 1968, p. 36) quite unlike the literature of earlier and other cultures which represented an idea or typical situation (Campbell, 1968). Harold Bloom (1998) claims that Shakespeare influenced Western civilization by transcending the characterization of earlier genres to produce individual personalities capable of growth and change, and invented human beings as we are today. The new self-

awareness and self-assurance that arose out the troubadour tradition provided the impetus for this revival. However, it was not the replication of classical antiquity that occurred but the making of the modern individual (Janson, 1986).

At the height of the Renaissance Erasmus wrote that God's creation existed to provide a place for human nature to evolve. He argued with Luther about the concept of free will, believing that it was though individual will and personality and not grace alone that we achieve responsibility for ourselves and thus personal salvation (Moss, 2001). The Renaissance did not revive classical humanism but brought forth modern humanism (Cassirer, Kristellat, & Randal, 1956).

### ***The Enlightenment and Romanticism***

The logic and science of the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, coupled with the ideals of Romanticism, brought about the burgeoning of humanism (Gross, 2001). Montesquieu declared that respect of individuals for each other in a society which valued individual lives and allowed autonomy would be far more successful and satisfying than authoritarianism (Berman, 1970). But the buoyant optimism of those who trusted solely in reason and the bright ideas of the Enlightenment was overshadowed by the inhumanity of the age (Clark, 1970). Goya, particularly, in his disillusionment with the "enlightened", produced highly charged works depicting social horrors and greatly influenced the Romantic artists (Cole & Gealt, 1989). Humanist ideals, being very difficult to impose on a corporatist aristocracy and class system, and social reality diverged widely.

As the freethinking, Romantic age unfolded, any man became able to proclaim the worth of every human being (Gross) an idea that continues to reverberate and evolve to this day. Rousseau reiterated Montesquieu's ideas and emphasized that it was not competition, class struggle and war but self-development brought about by humanist education and egalitarianism that would provide a secure community inhabited by happy and fully developed individuals. It is within the Romantic ideal that we see how far humanism had come since classical antiquity. The Platonic conception of development involved imposing knowledge to promote maturity through enlargement of the mind. Rousseau's idea was that by allowing the individual to develop as natural abilities permitted, knowledge would be acquired and each person would mature according to natural law (Egan, 1999).

For Shopenhauer, individuality was born within the person: environment may hinder or aid it but does not define it. "Earned character" (Shopenhauer cited in Campbell, 1968) arising through experience and learning about one's inborn nature is "neither more nor less than the fullest possible knowledge of our own identity" (Shopenhauer cited in Campbell, 1968, p. 35). On the subject of art, Shopenhauer believed that for it to be significant and expressive of the individual character of the artist, it must be the expression of that individuality *as well as* the expression of humanity as a universal idea (Campbell, 1968). We are individuals and we are one: human identity cannot be separate from all life (Campbell, 1988).

Kierkegaard stated that every person is able to be an individual (Berman, 1970). As a Christian philosopher, he held Christ up as the symbol of the divine motivating force of human development. Yet he urged people not to succumb to the complacency of the Christian determinism of his day but to experience and examine their individual lives in order to make decisions to develop and fully experience their existence. The ideal of the fully developed individual within society was central to the Romantic Age and is expressed in the works of Blake, Carlyle, Chateaubriand, Stendahl, Schiller, Novalis, Hegel and others. Schlegel, a German Romantic saw individuality as "the original and eternal in man" (Randall, 1965, cited in Munro, 1985, p.3). The sacredness of the other lay in the fact that the other manifests individuality. "The moral man should express his uniqueness in his life in a manner akin to the original artist in his creative act" (Munro, p. 3). Romantic artists, holding this new license to express themselves poured their emotions onto their canvases, commenting brilliantly and movingly on the successes and shortcomings of their times.

### ***Modernism and postmodernism***

The Modern age can be said to have started in the late nineteenth century. In the early years of the modern period, great thinkers, writers, scientists and artists embraced a new consciousness, a new way of looking at humanity and the world (Bullock, 1985). Relief that old restrictive ways were passing coupled with excitement and fear for the new predominated the era (Bradbury & McFarlane, cited in Bullock, 1985). The discovery of the unconscious and Freud's original theories of the human mind revolutionized the way human beings were perceived (Bullock). Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto of

1848 declared the freedom and self-development of each human being must equal the freedom and self-development of all. What followed was a century of revolution in which, paradoxically, many acting ostensibly on these ideas succumbed to collectivism (Berman, 1970), corporatism (Saul, 1997: 2002) and censorship of the individual. As the religious wars of the sixteen hundreds spurned humanism, so too did events of the twentieth century (Bullock, 1985). It seemed to be an era of commandeered ideas. Nietzsche's (1844-1900) existential philosophy of the *übermensch* (superman), declaring that one could shape one's life by taking responsibility for that life and become superhuman (Moss, 2001), became the basis of one of the most brutal social experiments of all time.

Heidegger (1889-1976), who seems to be a little more cheerful than Nietzsche likened the existential experience to ecstasy. It is a state in which we can be outside ourselves or, more precisely, the true self can express itself without the constraints of the ego (Frye, 1992). In this state, which is at once individual and universal, one feels a part of all and that all is within. For Heidegger, it is not a matter of being the real self but of revealing it (Murdoch, 1962) and in this way being authentic. Indeed, authenticity is one of Heidegger's key words (Berman, 1970).

These ideas were taken up in literature throughout the twentieth century. The list is endless, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Albert Camus, Herman Hesse, Marcel Proust, the Beat writers and so on. The *avant-garde*, in the early part of the century of the century, professed the idealistic and political philosophy of Utopianism: technology would bring prosperity, equality and beauty to all (Hughes, 1980). In the latter part of the century individual expression peaked with the Abstract Expressionists, many of whom did not survive the ecstatic plunge into the self and succumbed to mental illness and suicide. At the same time, their products of individual self-expression were bought and sold by a cynical corporate elite. We can see the human desire for authenticity, as it began to appear fulfillable to more and more people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, become political. And because we have continued to wish to be authentic we have continued to affect politics and society (Berman, 1970). The New Left arose in the 1950s and 1960s and at the same time there was a resurgence of Humanism. Academics and philosophers turned away from the failure of collectivism and looked with fresh enthusiasm at "the Self" (Berman).

Popularized in the 1960s and 1970s, this new sense of identity gave way to the “Me Generation” and produced in some spheres of Western society a fear of rampant, self-centered individualism and of a society peopled by nonconformists interested only in their own aims and ends. It seems, however, that there has always been an antagonism between those who wish to be individuals and those who wish to control individuals.

In our postmodern times, we pick through ideas and things left over from the social and industrial revolutions constructing, reconstructing, deconstructing truth, beauty, authenticity trying to catch a glimpse of our own identities. Hierarchies are being dismantled; paternalism is passé. Artists, writers and critics argue over what art is and is not. The debate over individual rights and self-expression is being silenced by corporatism and professionalism (Saul, 1997). Humanists ask if their day is done or is it primed to burst forth anew (Taylor & Martin, 2001) - again.

Religions, mythologies and moral codes of the world, based on the philosophies of great individuals (e. g. Confucius, Buddha, Christ, Marx), quickly came to be institutions promoting individual adaptation to a social order. In our present day the desire to live an authentic individual life, having grown from the Renaissance, continues to engage our imagination - even as we are influenced by modern commercial, secular and often coercive institutions (Campbell, 1968). The search for self often seems doomed to be subjugated to societal conformity and political and corporate power complexes. Freedom from the gods and destiny, unconscious fears and impulses and repressive social control, is the ideal of Western civilization which arose out of “the growing conviction that the human race, within the limits of reality, could give direction to its society, just as individual citizens within that society could give direction to their lives” (Saul, 1997, p. 53-54). Too often, over the centuries, the humanistic cry for respect, human dignity and freedom has fallen on deaf ears, and philosophical systems have radically mutated from their origins. It is the creative spirit, the creative impulse that never changes and grows neither more nor less in humanity. We can see how it has moved in philosophers, artists and writers longing to express themselves and wishing to make it evident to others that we all share it.

Let us now look at how the field of psychology has risen to the call for consciousness and individuality; how it has tried to illuminate the human psyche and foster

its creative impulse towards wholeness, authenticity and happiness .

## **Chapter 2 - Psychology**

“The Highest bliss on earth shall be  
the joys of personality.”

(Goethe, cited in Jung, 1991, p. v)

The modern concept of the human being as an individual with an inner life, with instincts and impulses that help or hinder personality development began with the discovery of the unconscious which Ellenberger (1970) sets in 1775. In that year a dispute occurred between the popular exorcist and faith healer, Glassner, and the physician, Mesmer. The former, although appearing to be successful, could not adequately explain his methods to the new scientific community of the Enlightenment. At the same time, Mesmer, discerned that the physician-patient relationship had a profound effect on the healing process. What he called a “tuning in” (Ellenberger, p. 69) between persons was the concept that sparked the brilliant discoveries of modern psychotherapy. The ensuing literature is so vast and the number of schools of thought so varied that it would be impossible to give a creditable and thorough overview of the field. In this paper, I will touch only on those whose work informs my own and with whose philosophies I feel a special affinity in order to avoid too cursory a survey. Furthermore, I have chosen from their many concepts and constructs those that specifically relate to the individual, individual development, the individual within society and individual creative potential.

### ***Freud***

Freud is universally considered the father of modern psychological thought and the inventor of psychoanalysis. He altered forever how the human being is perceived, and his ideas continue to be simulating and challenging. Early in his career, he searched for biological causes of his patients’ disturbances. He began to see that the unhappiness, manifested in physical symptoms, of the people who came to see him had another cause. Their source often lay in suppressed childhood memories, stifled because a repressive Victorian society did not allow the expression of powerful emotions and conflict (Erikson, 1964). It is interesting that modern neuroscientific research on brain processes associated with affect, memory, attachment and trauma (Harrell, 2002) reconnects us with the roots of Freud’s discoveries and his concepts of early trauma.



Freud saw that to help his patients, he had to establish a relationship with them, engaging their healthy part in a sincere partnership to try to understand the unhealthy part (Erikson, 1964). This first principle of psychoanalysis is the cornerstone of all successful psychotherapeutic methods. The second principle, he came to realize, was that one cannot recognize in another what one cannot see in oneself. Freud discovered insight and communication could reveal the contents of the human mind and bring them to consciousness (Erikson, 1964). Through the study of his patients, Freud began to believe that all neurotic symptoms came from within the mind of each individual (Mitchell & Black, 1995). He formed a metaphorical “map” of the mind comprised of the “id” (instinctual drives of aggression and sex), the “superego” (conscience or moral code), and the “ego” which attempted to negotiate between the two in an attempt to allow discharge of the impulses in a way acceptable to the superego (Rubin, 1987). According to Freud this conflict and its subsequent resolution or lack of it drive human beings towards humaneness or inhumanity (Erikson, 1964). The cornerstone of Freud’s theory of individual development was the *Oedipus Complex*. Although it has evolved it remains the foundation of modern Freudian theory (Mitchell & Black). Simply put, the Oedipus Complex describes childhood sexual desires for the opposite parent. It is the resolution of this psychic conflict by adaptation of parental ideals that promotes healthy development: irresolution produces neurosis and blocks development. Human psychological development proceeds, according to Freud, along a psychosexual pathway. The resolution of each stage until one reaches adulthood results in maturity. This developmental process of the individual is primarily prompted by the pleasure principle. Freud, in keeping with the contemporary scientific thinking of his day, saw human beings as naturally programmed to be ruthless egoists motivated only by personal pleasures (Mitchell & Black). When a human being comes to be animated by the reality principle rather than the pleasure principle, it may be taken to represent a very great advancement in ego-development. (Freud, 1924; 1956).

According to Freud (1961) individual development occurs through the interaction between the urge towards happiness and the urge towards unity with others. Individual and societal development contend with each other in every human being and in every society (Freud, 1961). Yet the life force animates both individual and societal evolution. There is

even a cultural super-ego and it is similar to the individual super-ego, its purpose being to foster development. However, the community, taken as a system, doesn't actually need the happiness of its individuals to progress culturally. Freud saw egotism and altruism as opposing forces. The former is the force of the individual, the latter, the force of the community. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1961), Freud's main theme was the unresolvable divergence between instinctual drives and their restriction by the momentum of civilization. This is based mostly on Freud's theories of sexuality and aggression and the healthy society's sense of taboo. An example of an admonition of a cultural super-ego, usually based, paradoxically, upon the life of an individual, is "Love thy neighbour". As an ideal, it appeals to our altruistic side which yearns for community and an avoidance of aggression, but is rather too strict and probably impossible for the ego, longing for personal happiness, to bear (Freud, 1961). Nonetheless, a well developed individual, acting upon the reality principle, has a better chance of maintaining an ethical stance towards the rest of humanity (Erikson, 1964) than someone whose actions are based on the pleasure principle. The sexual impulses, sublimated and expressed culturally, lead to the highest individual and social expressions of the human mind (Freud, 1956).

Freud considered his theories as doctrine and adamantly disallowed opposition and divergence from them and his methods (Mitchell & Black, 1995), no matter how original and creative the counteraction. As we shall see, the ideas that nevertheless evolved, by both maintaining and altering his theories have brought us a more and more refined concept of the individual and individual development. Although his aim was specifically to study mental illness, his subsequent understanding of the role of individual forces within each of us led to a greater knowledge of how human beings develop. Further, the one-on-one, person to person relationship in the psychoanalysis was based on the specific way an individual responded to these universal drives. The outcome of successful treatment was improved mental health and personal development. It is thought-provoking that Freud felt that his theories were better understood by artists and writers than doctors. But whatever his contemporaries' and current opinion is of Freud, it cannot be denied that we have him to thank for opening the human mind so it could understand itself in a way that it never had before, and thus furthering individual development.

## ***Jung***

Considering the popularity of Jungian theory, it is interesting to note that Jung himself strongly stated that the individual psyche could not be understood according a fixed theory but rather each individual must be treated by the therapist as unique (1991). In fact, the goal of individual development or, as Jung called it, individuation, was the realization of each person's uniqueness (Henderson, 1964). Nevertheless, a model of individual development emerged out of Jung's creative and indefatigable study of the human mind. One of the disagreements Jung had with Freud was that he felt the unconscious comprised much more than the infantile and objectionable (Fordham, 1966). Jung saw the story of individual development reenact itself over and over in myths of the world with the components of the human unconscious personified by archetypal characters (Jung, 1964). He believed that the human being developed slowly and involuntarily, according to a system of growth organized by what he called the Self, which is at once the centre and totality of the psyche (Henderson, 1964; Jung, 1986). It consists of each individual's unique human nature and at the same time embraces our universal relationship with all of life (Fordham).

Jung believed that the components of the Self were archetypes shared by every human being and yet expressed uniquely in each. They are the shadow, the dark aspects of personality; anima or animus, elements of male and female psyches bearing the archetypal imprint of the opposite sex which are projected onto real men and women in individuals' lives; the persona, the mask or image an individual presents to the world which is a result of the civilizing process that helps the individual to reconcile Self with society; and the ego, the conscious part of the Self which negotiates between the unconscious parts and gradually allows the Self to be revealed to the individual and others (Fordham, 1966; Jung, 1986).

For Jung, individual realization of the personality was the pinnacle of human experience and goal of human life. And it requires great courage, he felt, to be fully self-determined and at the same time adapt to the conditions of life (Jung, 1991). "A whole lifetime, in all its biological, social and spiritual aspects" (p. 171) is needed for the individual human being to fully develop. Jung held that the desire to adapt to social convention is part of human psychic makeup. Our needs and choices almost always lead us to convention. It is only those who heed an inner voice, the Tao, the creative impulse who are

able to find their bliss, their vocation, their Way, and develop their individual personalities: who can withstand the attraction of conventionality and who are, by the force of their developed individuality, compelled to act upon the inner voice and not convention (1991). So Jung saw the development of the individual personality as a brave action. It is to fly in the face of the very community we wish to be part of.

The therapist must help individuals and protect them from their "own clumsy recourse to shortsightedness, ruthlessness and cynicism (Jung, 1958, p. 66), and support them in the development of individual personality. Objective values, no matter how excellent, will not help the persons who are not developing their own personalities (Jung, 1958). The Age of Enlightenment, aiming to rid society of superstition and its destructiveness, was unaware of those very same forces which continued and continue to dwell in the human psyche. If the immature give way to them, personal and societal suffering will continue (Jung, 1991) no matter what philosophical lodestar one may follow.

Jung observed that the development of the personality was not a popular pastime: to decry convention was never easy (Jung, 1991). But he saw individual development as not only benefitting individual human beings but as having an effect on society as a whole. The state is comprised of individuals and at the same time threatens to suppress the individual. The individual's life's meaning is not to be equated with public welfare and ever improving living standards. Because of an increasing collectivism, manipulated by powerful but not necessarily mature individuals, individual responsibility is decreasing and society becomes more and more identified with the state and expect it to fulfill needs and desires. The fate of the world depends upon the fate of each human being (Jung, 1958). However, Jung tells us that we can be saved from our fearful attachment to unsatisfying societal norms through the creative activity of our imaginations (Aite, 2001). The eternal expression of the human spirit, the root of all creation, occurs through the arts (Jung, 1958): art helps us see the contents of our psyche (Jung, 1986). Jung placed individual responsibility for one's personality development at the core of human endeavour and at the same time depicted it as a universal undertaking, the success of which relies upon the engaging of the creative spirit existing in all of us.

***Winnicott (Object-Relations)***

D. W. Winnicott's wish for his patients and his contribution to the therapeutic community were embodied in his concern "with the quality of subjective experience: the sense of inner reality, the infusion of life with a feeling of personal meaning, the image of oneself as a distinct and creative center of one's own existence" (Mitchell & Black, 1995, p.112). Winnicott believed that, although the human being continues to develop all through life, it is in the very early stages that many patterns of behavior, emotional well-being and the ability to relate to the environment and other people are established. That which is intrinsic to the emotional development of the human being is there from the start (Mitchell & Black). As the person matures, more of the individual personality emerges to engage with the surroundings and relationships that make up his/her life (Winnicott, 1988). He considered that clues to good adult mental health and socialization are to be found in this study of the early emotional development of the human being involved with his/her environment (Winnicott, 1988). To be happy and healthy, he maintained, a simple psychological foundation must be established upon which to build a rich and complex (not complicated) life (Winnicott, 1988).

This foundation of the inner reality is, ideally, the child's initial relationship with the mother. The mother does not need to be perfect but she needs to be good enough, that is, she must adapt well enough to her infant's needs to provide the empowerment which is necessary for healthy human development (Abram, p. 194). She furnishes an environment in which her baby experiences "a moment of illusion", in which s/he has complete control over everything that happens to him/her or, as Winnicott would say, "subjective omnipotence" (Mitchell & Black, p. 128). He coined the term *good-enough mother* to describe a dependable mother figure who fosters trust and allows the child to develop into who he or she is able to be - into his or her *true self*. Without this positive interaction between parent and child in which the child's initiatives towards personal expression are responded to positively, there arises the great likelihood that a *false self* will develop, a self that responds to the needs of the caregiver and not to the impetus of self-expression (Mitchell & Black, 1995).

Winnicott differed from Freud in that he felt the pleasure principle and reality principle existed equally in the human infant (Machado, 2001). The latter did not expand as

the former came under control. Rather they were reconciled in what Winnicott called the *transitional space* between the mother and baby. This is the foundation of object-relations theory (Machado). Before a human being can savor independence, dependence and trust must be experienced (Winnicott, 1967). The capacity to develop as an individual depends upon the capacity to be alone. It is with the good-enough mother that the child learns to be alone with her and then without her in a self-assured way that enables the child to explore personal feelings, needs and impulses (Storr, 1988). Winnicott gives equal importance to the "inner or personal psychic reality" (Winnicott, 1967, p.372) and the individual's actual environment. The first is biologically determined; the second is shared objective reality. Both are more or less constant. He called the area between these realities *transitional space*. It is in this space, which depends upon human dependability and a safe environment, that the individual can learn to trust, that the individual can fully develop. "It can be looked upon as sacred to the individual in that it is here that the individual experiences creative living" (p. 372). The child will very often choose an object, or a movement or stories or song or something from the real world around him that becomes uniquely his or hers and at the same time unites him or her with the mother. The use of this *transitional object* to mediate between the inner and outer world, between phantasy and reality, may be a human being's first creative act (Storr, 1988). As the human being develops, reality and phantasy come to be distinguished from each other. It is through the human characteristic of being able to fantasize and at the same time be objective that civilization and socialization occur (Winnicott, 1988). Myths, heroic tales, religion and philosophy, the arts are all examples of ways of creatively making the navigation between reality and phantasy easier and more complete until one is finally mature.

If early object relations are impaired, repair can take place within psychotherapy with the therapist fulfilling the role of good-enough mother providing an opportunity for the person to learn to trust, thereby lowering defenses, releasing creative energy (Winnicott, 1988) and responding to the original creative impulse.

I am concerned with the search for self and the restatement of the fact that certain conditions are necessary if success is to be achieved in this search. These conditions are associated with what is usually

called creativity ... and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self. (Winnicott, 1971, cited in Abram, p.283)

Jung and Winnicott share two ideas: that individual development occurs in a relational context and that play and phantasy are important factors in development (Aite, 2001). The true self has its roots in the real and imaginative life of childhood (Winnicott, 1990). It is this link between objectivity and subjectivity - reality and phantasy - outer and inner worlds - that helps one realize one's creative potential (Storr, 1988). Or put another way creativity gives human beings a rest from the need to discriminate between reality and phantasy (Winnicott, 1988). For example, while a child is doing art, he acts spontaneously and, at the same time, accepts the limits and controls of the art making process. This, according to Winnicott (1965), is the democratic process exemplified.

We want to make it possible for each individual to find and establish his or her own identity in such a solid way that eventually, in the course of time, and in that individual's own manner, there will be attained a capacity to become a member of society - an active, creative member, without loss of personal spontaneity and without loss of that sense of freedom which comes, in health, from within. (Winnicott, 1965, p. 28)

Writing further about democracy, Winnicott stated that society needs to allow freedom of ideas and freedom of expression of these ideas (Winnicott, 1988). He urged the examination of the underdeveloped understanding of the importance of cultural experience in the development of the individual (Machado, 2001). We live three lives: the life of interpersonal relationships, the inner or personal life most richly expressed through creativity, and the life of cultural experience, present and cumulative. Creative social interaction is based on trust and a common heritage founded on the creativity of human beings who lived before us (Winnicott, 1990).

Winnicott believed that the individual could not be evaluated apart from his or her social environment. But the well-being of a society depends upon the well-being of the individuals who live in it (Winnicott, 1990). As a child develops, he moves through an ever-expanding social circle engaging with wider and wider groups. "If the group is too large,

the individual loses touch; if it is too narrow there is a loss of a sense of citizenship” (Winnicott, 1965, p.147). “Happy is he or she who is being creative all the time in personal life as well through life partners, children, friends, etc. There is nothing that is outside this philosophical territory” (Winnicott, 1990, p. 49). Indeed, Winnicott (1988) says that human development at its best will equip us to be as close as possible to what we were born able to be, and at the same time that the “gradual independence of environmental factors leads to socialization” (1988, p. 8).

### ***Humanist Psychology***

#### ***Maslow***

Maslow is considered to be the founder of Humanist Psychology. In 1954, he sent out letters soliciting correspondence from people concerned with “the scientific study of creativity, love, higher values, growth, self-actualization [and] basic needs gratification” (Maslow, cited in Misiak & Sexton, cited in Moss, 2001, p. 15). He felt that more could be understood of the human potential for well being by studying healthy, creative individuals rather than adhering to the psychological tradition of studying the mentally ill (Moss, 2001). It is through what he called *peak experiences*, high levels of human personal knowledge, that the pinnacle of human achievement could be observed. Through such experiences, the human being has an opportunity to be who he or she is able to be: *self-actualization* thus occurs (Moss, 2001; Maslow, 1996). All beings possess a higher nature, Maslow said, and focussing on peak experiences causes them to happen more often, and induces this higher nature to develop. It was, in fact, the “secret of the next step of evolution” (Maslow, 1996). Maslow believed, however, that in order to achieve self-actualization certain basic needs had to be fulfilled first. Maslow’s *hierarchy of needs* were food and security first, then sex, self-esteem and finally self-actualization (Maslow, 1996). There are those who would argue with this. Victor Frankl (1966), for instance, believed that self-actualization depended not upon the conditions of one’s life but upon the conscious choice to fulfill one’s potential. This he came to realize after spending time in a Nazi concentration camp and seeing people whose basic needs were far from fulfilled realize their higher nature as loving, humane individuals.

In a bureaucratic-industrial society, we feel dissatisfied and unfulfilled, ineffectual against injustice. But during peak experiences we feel whole and happy. The root of



neurosis is the thwarting of the basic human need to be creative. Self actualization involves the flow of creative energy (Maslow, 1996).

### ***Rogers***

Carl Rogers was a leader in the Humanist movement of the nineteen sixties, seventies and eighties. He ushered in a new way of practising psychotherapy first known as *non-directive*, then *client-centred* and finally, *person-centred* (Rogers, 1989). By taking active listening to almost an art form and emphasizing an empathic response to clients, he exerted a great deal of influence on the way other professionals such as teachers, ministers, social workers and psychologists counseled people. He began to see the psychotherapist or counselor as a helper aiding individuals in discovering that the resolution of their problems lay within them (Rogers, 1989). It is in a safe, trustworthy relationship that a person can be helped to develop freely into who he or she is able to be. In the process of person-centred therapy, the individual gradually becomes more attuned to his or her own experience and can let defenses down. In psychotherapy, the person undergoing the “process of becoming” (Rogers, 1961, p. 123) learns to trust him/ herself, his/her own human, organic nature. Through ongoing, authentic experience and self-reflection, the human being fulfills the capacity to become the fully developed individual he or she can be. The choice to be one’s self is the greatest of human responsibilities (Rogers, 1961).

New knowledge of the inner self helps the person to attain more a realistic perception of others and the environment and find a way to honestly relate to them (Rogers, 1961). Gradually he or she comes to experience the world and people around not according to patterns circumscribed by earlier impressions and occurrences. I cannot say it as well as he:

... When he is most fully man, when he is his complete organism, when awareness of experience, that peculiarly human attribute, is most fully operating, then he is to be trusted, then his behavior is constructive. It is not always conventional. It will not always be conforming. It will be individualized. But it will also be socialized (Rogers, 1961, pp. 105, 106).

Rogers describes human beings as having a psychological desire for cultural and

social experiences that equal the psychological desires for food and sex. In interesting contrast with Freud and Maslow, he places the human requirements for cultural and social experience along side drives and needs, presenting a more lateral and nonhierarchical view of them. These disparate views offer an intriguing opportunity for speculation and will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

One of the main purposes of humanist psychology, then and now, is to remind society and its members of the need to accept and promote human worth and dignity (Moss, 2001). The lively and challenging ideas of the Humanist psychology movement have been overrun in recent decades by the scientific push towards cognitive and neurobiological research and scholarship, and postmodern philosophy (Polkinghorne, 2001). At present, humanism has arrived at a crossroads (Taylor & Martin, 2001). Will its modernist ideals be finally assimilated by twenty-first century psychological, philosophical and scientific movements or will it stand on its own (Taylor & Martin), entering into dialogue with contemporary notions of holism, narrative and postmodernism to refine and and renew the quest for authentic human experience?

### ***Postmodernism***

Postmodern concepts of psychotherapy, narrative and social construction, appear to be the antithesis of humanist psychology in many ways, positing that it is not individual experience that shapes us, but that we are constructed out of the contexts in which we live (Josselson & Lieblich, 2001). Our search for meaningful existence *is* our meaningful existence. We don't determine who we become: we are constructed by what we do. Postmodern theorists and practitioners (Anderson, 2001; Bott, 2001, 2002; Riley, 1997; Snyder, 2002) are examining the commonalities and differences in psychoanalytic, behavioural, systemic and other therapies. There emerges a common ground for humanist and postmodern thought. Both seek understanding rather than control; both choose to place the human being, at once complex and unified, at the centre of inquiry ; and both see the person in the context of relationship (Josselson & Lieblich, 2001). The narrative philosophy is that an understanding of people through their individual stories will lead us to a better understanding of ourselves. Humanism desires the fulfillment of human potential. Dialogue is a key component of humanism and narrative. The important concept seems to be non-

judgment and inclusiveness. Therefore, present-day humanism with its rich foundation, and what appears to be a foot in each camp, modernist and postmodernist, may be poised to be at the centre of a dialogue between the two, ideally encouraging the tenets in each that support and foster individual freedom, choice, holism and a mature, humane society. Wadlington (2001), for example, suggests that it is humanism that may take up the challenge of postmodernism, informing, on the one hand, modern psychological, psychoanalytic, scientific, philosophical traditions with a humane, creative, non-reductionist way of exercising them (Chessick, 2000; Chessick, 2002; Goldberg, 2001; Wadlington;) and, on the other, embracing the idea of the individual as embodying all that is needed to partake of authentic human existence (Polkinghorne, 2001).

In the end it is, as Winnicott (1965) said, that enduring emotional growth is the idea which unites all psychological theories. Thornton Wilder (1957) in his preface to *Three Plays*, describes literature in a way that may be employed to describe how best to continue the search for knowledge of the human psyche: that it should resemble “a torch race rather than a furious dispute among heirs” (p. xii)

### Chapter 3 - Creativity and Art

“That he may not be merely word, he must impart form to matter, he shall externalize all within and shape everything without.”

(Schiller, cited in Cane, 1951, p. 21)

#### ***Creativity***

Freud postulated that creativity arose out of sublimation of the libido and was more a result of unconscious than conscious process (Gardner, 1992). He didn't see this in quite the positive light that we do today, for he felt that it was based on infantile feelings (Storr, 1988). However, there has been an increasing interest in the study of the psychological insight that comes through the creative process (Neiderland & Sholevar, 1981). Alongside the study of human potential, humanism greatly expanded the psychological study of creativity (Aarons & Richards, 2001). The literature and definitions that have arisen are varied and vast. Evolutionary, psychoanalytic, attachment, object-relation, aesthetic (Henley, 1999) and psychological (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; 1996) theory have all contributed to the understanding of the creative process. I have chosen to look at creativity as that which lies within all human beings and is a prime source of life, growth, evolution (Aarons & Richards, 1999) and individual development.

The creative process promotes the integration of the inner and outer worlds, of subjectivity and objectivity (Storr, 1988). Sholevar describes the two poles of creativity. “In one case the creative act is aimed at predominately fighting conflict, and at repair and catharsis; on the other, it is used to analyze and organize the external and internal universe (stimuli) in a spirit of contemplation” (Neiderland & Sholevar, 1981, p. 90). Or, more to the point, perhaps, creativity means being able to navigate extremes and move along the spectrum of experience as the need arises (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). David Henley describes the *original creative impulse* as that which motivates a human being to explore life and “make special” (Dissanyake, cited in Henley, 1999, p. 132) and believes that early attachment and channeling of drives are the “forces which bring art and creative expression into being” (p. 2). He goes on to define relationship as a basic component of creativity. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) enlarges the concept even further with his idea of the *flow* state in

which pleasure and challenge comprise an ecstatic and optimal experience (much like Maslow's peak experience which leads to self-actualization (1996).

Equating the creative process with ecstasy, Jung wrote that ecstatic moments can happen in love and art and produce a sense of inner unity. Being creative can be like being in love (Storr, 1988). We can relate this to Joseph Campbell's (1988) description of bliss as individual expression, a choice (often difficult) made with the heart which manifests itself creatively. The sense of harmony within and unity with others is closely connected to the creative process. While Freud felt that the comparison of the rapture of love with a feeling of universal connectedness was regression (Storr, 1988), it now seems to be seen more in terms of the *original creative impulse* (Henley, 1999) which leads to individual development and harmony. For pleasure alone does not mean creativity, a certain effort of the will is needed (Csikszentmihalyi 1990); ecstasy and discovery together as creativity redirect human drives (Storr, 1988) fostering development and not regression. It might be speculated that the ecstatic state, the creative state, the bliss of lovers depicted by the early troubadours harks back to the very early mother-child relationship (object-relations) which affects our ability to experience ecstasy, be creative, enter into relationships and develop fully. Gardner (1992) identifies the three elements of creativity as being the individual, others and work. "Whatever definition we arrive at, it must include the idea that life is worth living or not, according to whether creativity is or is not a part of an individual person's living experience" (Winnicott, 1990, p.39).

### ***Human Capacity for Creativity***

Rollo May (1953) called the highest level of consciousness the "creative consciousness of self" (p. 139) and it is the dawning of insight that rises up from the subconscious. Maybe it is our highest level, but its source lies within us all. Genetic make-up, inborn instincts and drives, early experiences and relationships inform in each individual the "proto-aesthetic" (Henley, 1999, p. 90) experience expressed in play, ritual and creative symbolization. This early impulse to play, ritualize and "make special" is the source of creativity and as the individual develops, it becomes more complex. Regardless of differences in capabilities, the creative process can foster individual development (Henley, 1999) in everyone. In fact, the "the ego is involved in the lifelong struggle for survival by

mobilizing its creative potential (Neiderland & Sholevar. 1981, p. 79).

“My feeling is that the concept of creativeness and the concept of the healthy self-actualizing fully human person seem to be coming closer together and may perhaps turn out to be the same thing” (Maslow, 1973, cited in Storr, 1988, p. 200). Maslow felt this could not occur unless basic human needs were fulfilled. Csikszentmihalyi (1991) counters this by suggesting that our perception of our needs keeps escalating, and that even in impoverished conditions there are those who can engage the creative process and call on inner resources to actualize a happier existence (as was observed by Victor Frankl, [1966] in Auschwitz). Arnheim expresses it even more strongly saying, “to pretend that deprived persons have only material needs is to despise them” (1986, p. 235). Csikszentmihalyi further offers the idea of “hierarchies of goals” (1991, p. 28) in which individuals may choose to ignore needs in order to pursue a goal, exemplified by the the protester on a starvation diet or the proverbial “starving artist” who will buy paint before food. The *flow* state can become so desirable to some individuals that they will suffer physical or psychological deprivation to attain it (Gardner, 1992). Self-development comes to depend on what one’s attention is focussed upon, and in turn, one’s self directs what one pays attention to. Thus the growth of the self may be imagined as circular: consciousness expands and individuals develop. It is the human potential to self-actualize and to use all the endowments of the self to develop and mature. However, it has been strongly argued that this requires a relational opposite to be expressed (Rogers, 1961) and for the circularity of development to be set into motion. “Creativity always has the stamp of the individual upon its product but the product is not the individual nor his materials but partakes of the relationship between the two” (Rogers, 1961, p. 349). Rogers believed that creativity requires an *other*, be it a person, object, event or circumstance. The creative process requires the interaction between this other and a unique individual.

Specifically, the individual needs the *other* to express individuality. Even an artist working in solitude intends to convey something to someone (Storr, 1988). The creative process tends towards communication. Maslow believed that people needed solitude to have creative experiences and find meaning in life, whereas the object-relation school believed that relationship with others was the source of meaning (Storr, 1988). Storr suggests that it

is the depth of the relationship that varies. Some of us need closer relationships than others to express our creativity and some of us need and bear solitude more than others. The tendency toward one or the other is yet another way of expressing individuality. We can develop and use our creativity in our own way to help us in all areas of our lives, personal and social (Goleman, Kaufman, & Ray, 1992). It is the creative individual who can be satisfied, happy and even make others happy (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Rogers goes a step further and stresses that the survival of humanity necessitates the creative development of individuals and culture (1961).

### ***Development of Creativity in Individuals and Society***

Human beings develop because something in the human psyche demands it. Jung (1991) relates the urge towards individuality with the Tao, the Chinese concept of the interior way of being which, like flowing water, moves steadily to a goal. The goal of individual development is wholeness and fulfillment. The personality is the Tao which runs through all and each - it is the creative spirit or impulse animating our personalities. It unites us and gives us our identity. This inner urge towards wholeness and fulfillment is not to be confused with instinctual drives. Following the tendency to obey genetically programmed instincts as though they were the voice of inner truth (or to mistake drive impulse for the creative impulse), without consciously considering them renders us exploitable (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). "Control of consciousness determines the quality of life" (Csikszentmihalyi, p. 20), and was first attempted in the ancient disciplines of Zen and Yoga, and latterly in psychoanalysis. The desired end was control over inner chaos and societal manipulation of instincts. Societal organizations have always been able to exploit human discontent and human drives to ensure a compliant population. Giving into genetically programmed drives rather than attempting to develop one's individuality in a creative way results in an unsatisfying surrender to what those around want and expect from one (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991) and not in personal fulfillment and mature relationships.

In this postmodern era of the dismantling of institutions and reorganization of social systems, typified by a decline in institutional control *and* support, the individual may be more likely to turn within to find guidance towards self-fulfillment and happiness. Increasing numbers of people are becoming disappointed with the social devices for

alleviating dissatisfaction, anxiety and fear, be they religion, class conventions, ethnic and national customs, etc. The only way to really alleviate a growing sense of existential uneasiness, both socially and individually, is by addressing one's own inner life and finding some meaning there (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). In turning away from authoritarian decrees on what constitutes meaning and happiness, many people have come to rely on underdeveloped instincts to inform them (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991) and, in Jungian terms, mistake the knowledge of the ego-personality for true knowledge of the self (Saul, 1995). "If it feels good, do it." The adage of the Me Generation of the nineteen-sixties continues to inform the disenchanted of our present times. But, in reality, it becomes painfully apparent that one is giving in to the very impulses that continue to be socially exploited by new sources of social control - corporations and the media, for example.

Human beings appear by nature to be dissatisfied (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Freud, 1989). Neither society's maneuverings nor personal pursuit of comfort and distraction gratify us. And so the individual human being has to find ways to recognize and develop the creative impulse. The fully developed, creative individual will contribute to society and the common good, and a society made up of mature creative individuals will support individual development as a basic right and a source of societal strength (Saul, 1997; 2002; Winnicott, 1965).

Individual development, or what Csikszentmihalyi (1991) calls complexity, depends upon a personal and balanced investment in both autonomy and connectedness in order not to be impaired by self-centredness or conformity. Pleasure facilitates creative development but alone does not bring it about. Nor is self-discipline by itself enough. Combined, however, they help us to enjoy life and develop without diminishing the happiness of others (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Carl Rogers (1961) writes that creativity can be constructive or destructive, and only when the individual is "open" (p.352) to personal experience, aware of hostile and friendly impulses, societal expectations but personal needs as well, will he or she be able to live a reasonably harmonious and self-fulfilling life amongst others. It is the personally decreed balance between solitude and company, self-concern and altruism (Storr, 1988) that provides the stable atmosphere for creativity and self-development.

Creativity compensates for loss and affords resolution of conflict not only amidst



the shared vicissitudes of life but also, and especially, in the personal realm. In the face of neuroses and mental illness, it provides an opportunity for symbolic repair and restoration after loss. Creative growth parallels ego growth (Neiderland & Sholevar, 1981). Even when the capacity for intimacy is damaged and a person is ill-equipped for one reason or another for creative individual development, healing may occur through the cultivation of creative imagination. If one cannot relate to others, one may still be able to relate back to what one did in a creative moment and thus facilitate the creative process, renewal and development. The *other* can be one's own past creative work (Storr, 1988).

Even if we have been fortunate enough to be equipped by nature, our upbringing and our environment to realize our creative potential and develop fully, we must still weather the forces of societal conventions and necessity when we try to heed the inner voice, the creative impulse, and choose personal fulfillment over conformity. We each have to learn to take control of our inner lives and allow the urge to be creative to flow through us; and at the same time recognize that this single force springs from the vast, deep, mysterious sense of a shared life (Campbell, 1968).

### **Art**

Art is a *flow* experience in which defenses are dropped and a person's attention is so directed in a creative task that he or she develops as a result. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). The early proto-aesthetic impulse to play, ritualize, make special is the source of creativity and as the individual develops it becomes more complex. Through it the individual develops (Henley, 1999); through it the human ability to perceive is enlarged. "Construction of meaning through symbols is a distinct feature of humankind" (Davis, 1997, p. 57) and it is an elaboration of our power to play and to perceive. "Art is the capacity to express the nature and meaning of something through its sensory appearance" (Arnheim, 1997, p. 11). Or, in other words, our perceptions are symbolic and each individual uses symbols in art in a way that is personal and expressive of self (Arnheim, 1986). A work of art is the maker's vision (Van Gogh, 1960) and a refined and illuminated revelation and expression of a person's perception (Arnheim, 1986). Art then is the transformation of perceived abstract facts into concrete images (Arnheim, 1992) through the use of symbols. Art enables us to show how we each perceive our inner and outer worlds: what is important, what is not. We

use the elements of our existence to do this. Arnheim goes on to suggest that art works are the most befitting transitional objects once we have outgrown our teddies, thumbs, blankets, etc. They assist the lifelong resolution of reality and phantasy, our inner and outer worlds and thus individual development.

The argument arises about whether or not everyone can be creative and make art or not. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) conceives of creativity as being only evident to any degree in a limited number of people. It is true that we cannot all be artistic geniuses. But genius informs, and the artistic genius of Western civilization has informed and continues to inform us of the universal possibilities for growth afforded by the creative process. The creator/artist geniuses of the last five centuries who were a product of the flowering of the Individual in Western civilization have been the vanguard for us all. Since the Renaissance, we have looked to them for they were precursors of what was to come: they have shown society its ills; they have shown us the inherent capacity for growth and development that lies within us all. In our postmodern times, we say that greatness may be embraced by everyone. The same conditions for creative development that lie within the gifted lie within us all (Arnheim, 1997).

Through the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Romantic Age, artists gradually came to understand causality in a new way. It was not the superstitious appeasement of the gods or God, and their priests, but an understanding and empathy for human impulses, needs and emotions. Since the eighteenth century, artists have gradually come to be inspired by unconscious, emotional and personal experience, and left behind the idea of art as an elaboration of a rational view of the world (Kris, cited in Sass, 1994). Romanticism and Modernism have shared the objective of “renewing perception” (Sass, 1994, p. 47), and artists have had the job of showing people what is beautiful and what is ugly often in direct contrast to the society of their times (Frye, 1992). But while Romanticism glorified nature, innocence and emotion, Modernism came to be suspicious (Sass, 1994 ) of what they saw as naïveté. Compared to the Romantic expression of unity with nature and our deepest feelings, Modern and postmodern artists have manifested a sense of detachment and alienation. This may be seen as reversion, giving voice to our darkest impulses, or evolution based on the increasing self-conscious introspection of the twentieth century.

Art critics, sociologists, psychologists and philosophers argue over whether regression in art has been a welcome and beneficial opportunity to begin again or a hedonistic aberration (Sass, 1994). The great contribution of Modern abstract art is that it brought into view unseen, unconscious forces and feelings. In this way, Modern art prepared the way for everyone, psychotic or otherwise, to look at and value the inner world (Arnheim, 1992) which all are able to do, no matter how human beings differ in their capacity to observe, experience and portray the outer world.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a reaction to the idealism of aesthetics set in. Decadence and later awkwardness and even brutality were presented by the avant-garde's expressions of new possibilities and peaks of human expression beyond the idealism and perceived naiveté of the past (MacLagan, 1999). At the same time they hoped to offer an explanation for a rapidly changing culture (Hughes, 1980; Bullock, 1985). Alienation and optimism shared the artistic stage (Bullock, 1985). Aesthetics came to encompass a rebellious individualism. The idea of an objective measure of truth and beauty became anathema in the twentieth century (MacLagan, 1999) culminating in an ongoing and relentless postmodern discourse. However, the subsequent cult of the artist-genius has much to answer for according to Donald Kuspit (1993). He condemns the avant-garde, on the one hand, for using art to radically foist change upon society, and, on the other, for providing the suffering and isolated artist-saviour as a model for authentic selfhood. Rather, he states, the artist ought to be a herald of social and personal redemption and transformation, showing how art may be a mediator between self and world.

In a time when the past contributions of Western civilization and its art have been looked at askance and even dismissed out of hand as anthropocentric and chauvinistic, they still cannot be banished. Kuspit (1999), for one, accuses postmodernism of throwing out the baby with the bathwater and disposing of creative self-expression as it rehashes metaphors and symbols. "Chaotic eclecticism" as art (p. 570) is not an adequate model for the self but neither is the omnipotent insularity of the Modern period (Kuspit, 1993). He suggests a psychoanalytical approach to artistic expression as a solution to the contemporary dilemma concerning what art is or isn't: it is a conscious exercise of creativity and not novelty that will produce works reflecting individuality. Art must presume integrity and completeness,

to degree that is unattainable in reality. in order to aid individuals achieve a sense of self.

Modernism and postmodernism have an atmosphere of skepticism about them which, from a psychoanalytic point of view prevents unhindered, unprejudiced observation and perception (Sass, 1994). We have all, in Western society, to a greater or lesser degree, been influenced by the paradigm of the avant-garde artist - the grand visionary taking a stand against the world. To even approach this zeal, self-confidence and ideal is daunting to most. Railing against it may even be more so. Anxious postmodern self-monitoring becomes irksome and even paralyzing. But there may be another way of relating to the present world through art. Donald Kuspit (1993) gives us the "good-enough artist" (p. 294) who seeks a way of engaging the world critically but also intimately as "the ground of self-realization" (p.295). Taken as a model, the good-enough artist teaches us that we don't need to stand in isolation, suffering as a result of our drives, fears and discontents, raging at an antagonistic world.

The heroic quest for the Grail has culminated, in art at any rate, in the idea of artist as hero. And the very individuality that was sought has become a device for entry into a closed circle. Even though we may recognize in the artist-genius the ideal of the authentic individual, Kuspit (1993) suggests that it is outside the charmed circle that art will revive. Whether it will be good art or not is not the question. Will it offer an unprecedented opportunity for self-realization and "symbolic maintenance with the true self in Winnicott's sense of the term" (p. 296)? Arnheim (1986) declares that the imperatives of good art are not mechanical expertise nor self-indulgent decorativeness; it is genuine and self-directed and not to be measured against a norm or a convention (Arnheim in an interview by McNiff, 1975). Good art or good-enough art is contingent upon how it expresses and reveals the truth and experience of the person who makes it to both the viewer and the the maker. The unique quality of artistic expression is that it can display and interpret human experience - feelings, wishes, drives, the sum of what we are made of (Arnheim, 1992). Arnheim (1986) believes that "good works of art tell the truth" (p. 255) and that people should work hard to produce the best art work possible. Optimal experience, which can occur through art, depends upon individual effort and accepting challenges (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). This then allows one to engage the innate creative process. "A person spending time in trifles

cheats himself of his own humanity" (Arnheim, p. 235).

Trifles are often packaged and offered to us as needs. Corporatism in the form of mass media and commercialism (aiming to profit from the pleasure principle) has diminished the worth of authentic artistic expression and at the same time devalued human experience. The disorganized and disjointed environment we inhabit affects how we view and express our inner selves and how we relate to our world (Arnheim, 1986). We often choose convention over self-development out of fear. In our discontent and our all too human need for security, we choose the inhumane. "Art reflects the mind and there can be no good art without humanity" (Arnheim, p. 236). It is "the universal potential of art to embody our shared humanity" (Davis, 1997, p. 55). We become conscious of our inner selves through the devices of our societies, including art (Campbell, 1968). The power of art is to establish a circularity of experience with the individual using symbols to create meaning, influencing society which is the source and receiver of the individual artistic process (Davis). "No society can afford to ignore the fact that the capacity for behaving artistically is inherent in every human being and cannot be neglected without detriment to the individual and to society as a whole" (Arnheim, 1997, p. 11).

As new theories of the self and the development of authentic individuality have arisen (Polkinghorne, 2001) so have they been paralleled by developments in Western art. The urge for knowledge of the workings of our world, the desire to be rid of superstition, the quest for ecstasy, the yearning for innocence, truth and selfhood, the appeal for justice: self aggrandizement, suspicion, cynicism, the willingness to look at our darkest impulses: these have all contributed to our picture of the modern individual now. Kuspit (1999) writes that art history is in a crisis. Modernism and postmodernism are in warring camps. Truth, beauty and culture are at stake. "There is a difference between an urn and a chamberpot" (Piersens, 1980, cited in Kuspit, 1999, p. 534), and for the sake of culture it ought to be maintained. But Freud had us peer into the chamberpot and although its contents have been called art by Modernists and postmodernists alike, I think it is more that they inform art and aesthetics. "Beauty is truth and truth beauty" (Keats) but we needed to know as well, it would seem, that truth, and hence beauty, encompasses all our inner life including the stuff we would like to hide or bury or throw away. There is no truth or beauty, no complete

individual without the acknowledgment of the whole of human experience. A culture and society which recognizes and admits this can scrutinize the chamberpot and also admire the urn. So let us not attempt to deconstruct and dismantle the past or accept decadence but instead continue to evolve, building upon the best of the past, expanding our concepts of the individual and human dignity, truth and beauty.

Psychoanalytic, psychological and humanistic praxes, attempting to lift the veils of suspicion and fear, have informed the creative process. Psychoanalysis taught us not to fear the dark uncertainties of our minds. Through the interaction of the id, ego and super-ego, the mind expresses indirectly what it is too frightening to do directly. Jung taught us to revel in the universal stories and symbols of humankind and use them to understand ourselves and develop the unique individuals that we are. Winnicott showed us how we begin to imagine the world and experience ecstasy and love in our first relationship and how this nurtures our creative impulse. "The being of the world as an object is learned from within" (Buber, 1947, p. 88). And it is through our objects that we create our world. The humanist imagination brought this world into being and idealized it through the arts. In the tenuous civilization that has resulted, we teeter between repressed conformity and brutal egotism. The dark forces of our natures, our rich, eternal and shared knowledge (Saul, 2002), our capacity to love another all feed the human imagination and individual development.

Artists, with greater and lesser success, have tried and try to express what it is to be human. It is becoming more apparent that creativity is something we all share and that its development is a lifelong venture. "The works of an artist are the outward signs of his inner development as a person" (Storr, 1988, p. 199). And art is for everyone (Perdoux, 1996; Cane, 1951). Art therapy is well positioned to participate in the continuing quest to illumine the human condition and perceive the potential of the creative impulse for individual development.

## Chapter 4 - Art Therapy

Visions came, great and wonderful.  
We beheld them together, you and I.  
How image joined itself with images in our hearts!  
How a mutual animated describing  
Arose out of it and lived between you and me!  
We were there and were yet wholly here  
And wholly together, roaming and grounded.  
Thus the voice awoke that since then proclaims  
And witnesses to old majesty as new.  
True to itself and you and both together.  
(Martin Buber, 1969, p. 51)

### ***Art therapy: How it fosters individual development.***

Fundamental to art therapy is, and always has been, the belief that every human being has creative potential (Rubin, 1978) - an original creative impulse (Henley, 1999). To promote and sustain its development is the goal of art therapy. Through this development of creativity, individuals mature in a way that is personally specific (Rubin, 1978). Victor Lowenfeld (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982) describes how art is inherent in all human beings of all societies. From the fashioning of a useful object to the expression of the deepest of emotions art can convey the full spectrum of human experience.

Frances Cane (1951), an early proponent of art education began to observe the therapeutic possibilities of art. "Through art expression man finds his own patterns within himself and subsequently his pattern in relationship to his fellow men" (p. 375). Her sister, Margaret Naumberg, steeped in Freudian theory, became the first art therapist stressing the unconscious content of the art images over their aesthetic quality (Ullman, 1987). Edith Kramer, her contemporary, on the other hand believed that the art process, in and of itself, provided the therapy (Ullman). Either way, the artistic process yields the ability to communicate and resolve internal conflict within the parameters of the art work as unconscious material feed the creative process. As a therapist, the artist, because of the tendency to be able to communicate the inner experience of resolution and integration of

impulse and drives, assists people to realize their creative potential and make the best art they are capable of in order to express their unique inner lives (Kramer, 1958). Differences continue to abound but the pioneers and present day art therapists would agree that art is for everyone and that everyone can use it to look at and express their internal world.

Freud posited that images were formed out of libidinal drives and fantasies in each human being's preconscious to help the individual cope with them (Moon, 1997). Jung added that besides the personal imagery there existed a collective source of images which has evolved as human beings have evolved. Hanna Segal held the opinion that creativity exists in order to create the lost and ruined object (Moon). Marion Milner, on the other hand, believed that art goes beyond this to create "what has never been" as one acquires greater perception (Milner, 1979, p. xiv). Through art one is often attempting to reestablish, reinvent or repair early relationships (Sass, 1994). From a humanistic perspective, art allows the authentic and creative expression of the full range of a person's feelings, thoughts and ideas, and in this way aids the development of the individual. Humanistic art therapy does not attempt to "cure" symptomatic mental disorders, but rather promote mental well-being through the development of the individual's innate creative potential (Garai, 1987). Existentially speaking, human joy and suffering are of equal importance and are manifested in the individual internal images that emerge in art in a way that provides resolution and meaning (Moon, 1990). Otto Rank (1973), writing in 1932, foretold narrative art therapy by asserting that we may all become the "artists" of our own lives by tapping into their deepest inner experiences to give the story of our lives meaning. Narrative social constructionism engages the person in therapy to explore "lived experience" (Riley, 1997) and along with the therapist creatively find new meaning and resolution (Riley).

No matter which theoretical or philosophical stance they take or have taken, art therapists have recognized the parallels between the artistic process and the therapeutic one: symbols representing the inner life in all its complexity emerge in art and connect it with the outer life. In art therapy it is hoped that a lessening of defenses and internal prohibitions will in turn foster a richer imagination and symbolic expression (Robbins, 1989). The artistic process is therapeutic in that it moves along the continua of order and disorder, chaos and structure, weakness and strength, love and anger, cooperation and competition



and so forth (Moon, 1996; Garai, 1987). This “ordering” (Cane, 1951) and integration comes about as the unconscious is “coaxed” to consciousness indirectly through art. Consciousness becomes the result of the intentional organization of the unconscious (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991), which, in the process of art therapy, effects a continual consultation with the developing art work: there is a shifting back and forth between intuition and rational intellect (Arnheim in an interview by McNiff, 1975). The client’s art work, inner world and aesthetic transform during this process (Robbins, 1989) and creative potential is brought forth.

### ***The Therapeutic Relationship in Art Therapy***

The role of the art therapist is to use the art therapy space, the therapeutic relationship and the artistic expression in a holistic way to facilitate the intuitive creative process (McNiff, 1979) and tap into the original creative impulse (Henley, 1999). As an artist who learns to work with the rhythms of art materials accesses the creative process, the art therapist who works with the client establishing a unique relational rhythm will facilitate a creative experience (Robbins, 1989). Connecting the therapeutic process with the creative process, Robbins sees that as the artist needs to respond to the rhythm of his or her creativity to engage the transformative power of the internal images, so for the same reason must the art therapist respond to the rhythm of the client. It is the art therapist’s sensitivity and creativity that guides the tempo of the encounter (Malchiodi & Cattaneo, 1988). There emerges a balance between primary and secondary processes: the outpouring of creative energy and then reflection guide the individual in art therapy. Transformation and development result from the spontaneity of symbolic expression coupled with reflective communication (Robbins, 1989). Looking at the art work and assessing it is as important as making it (Arnheim in an interview by McNiff, 1979). When art therapy succeeds it is within the transitional space between individual and therapist where a relationship is formed, meaning is discovered and individual development is ongoing and dynamic. Trust and empathy are the hallmarks of the relationship.

Malcolm Learmonth (1994) writes about the art therapist, as an open and empathic witness of change and development in an individual. The relationship between therapist and client must be based upon dialogue and a sensitive attunement to the client in the present

moment and in the context of his or her life story. The art therapist's understanding of the client's images, symbols and thought processes fosters the therapeutic exchange (Garai, 1987). With the respect of an artist for the artistic process, the therapist approaches a person in therapy and in this way creates an "empathic transitional space" (Robbins, 1989, p. 9). It is within this relationship that the individual can safely, creatively tap into his or her inner world and develop.

The art therapist helps the client reorganize his illusions and make them reality (Robbins, 1987b, p. 71). The art therapist, like the good-enough mother, allows play and exploration and expression of the true self. In art therapy images and symbols move into consciousness with their own logic and organization regarding time and place. Therapeutic play, then, becomes the means by which to create a holding environment of relatedness and resonance with which deficits in early object relations can be repaired and the potential for creative living can be regenerated (Robbins, 1987b p. 70). It is this aspect of the transitional object or activity or space that along with the knowledge that we all have a unique and creative essence makes healing possible in art therapy. It is the combination of psychological and creative expression that moves the art therapist to enter into a therapeutic alliance that is the richer because it grows out of the creative impulse of both therapist and client. During the creative art therapy encounter, the unconscious can break through to the conscious (Malchiodi and Cattaneo, 1988) "Creativity within the context of human relationships permits one's inner imaginative world to become congruent with the outside so that each person shapes his/her destiny" (Robbins, 1987b, p.71)

### ***Creativity and Art Therapy***

When we are creative, we are building and rebuilding both our outer and inner world at the same time (May, 1985). Martin Buber (1947) describes the "originator impulse" (p.85). It is not just the process of a form evolving out of materials but more importantly the person's active participation in creating something that was not there before and thus taking part in the "becoming of things" (Buber, 1947, p. 85). There is an intuitive sense of discovery and invention (Arnheim in an interview by McNiff, 1975). Our internal world with all its joy and suffering can be made sense of through the creative process. The creative and curative in art does not result from an aimless messing around for the sake of

distraction, nor from a rigid adherence to a goal. Rather it is willful playfulness, a conscious effort towards discovering personal meaning facilitated by the art therapist. "From meaning comes motivation to create again. This establishes a cyclical process. From creation comes meaning, from meaning comes motivation, from motivation comes creation and on and on the cycle spins" (Moon, 1997, p. 126). The creative process, like the analytic process, when activated in therapy becomes lifelong and the individual can use it to understand his or her internal world and thus continue to develop (Neiderland & Sholevar, 1981). An artwork coupled with reflection is an aesthetic revelation (Rubin, 1974). In art therapy, one can discover something beautiful and true about oneself.

### ***Art Therapy and Aesthetics***

"Aesthetics is an active perceptual process; it is the interaction between an individual and an object which provides a stimulating harmonious experience" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 97). Developing aesthetic awareness means to become more sensitive towards perceptual, intellectual and emotional experiences so that these are deepened and integrated into a harmoniously organized whole. "Aesthetic development cannot be separated from creative development. Both are bound up with the whole process of growing and are influenced by all of the variables from our environment that make us different personalities" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 97). As the arguments abound over what art and creativity are and are not, so it is with aesthetics. In this paper, I wish to look at aesthetics from the perspective of individual development and art therapy and so for this purpose I am content to use Lowenfeld and Brittain's explanation of aesthetics as a starting point.

David MacLagan (1999) exhorts art therapists to take aesthetics into account as part of the art therapy process. Not to do so limits the scope of the art element of the process. The orientation of art therapy has been intrinsically geared towards uncovering the unconscious. Freud, in his contribution to our understanding of the human mind, turned what had been present (although less clearly defined) in art and literature and explained it scientifically. Margaret Naumberg specifically cautioned against aesthetic considerations in the art therapy process (McNiff, 1975). It is because of psychoanalytical theory that art work can be looked at psychodynamically, that is, from the point of view of an individual's

unconscious. It has seemed logical to focus on this because most art therapy clients do not have art training. And yet psychodynamic and aesthetic theory have this in common: they both attempt the difficult task of explaining and expressing the ineffable (MacLagan, 1999). Perhaps it was necessary to separate them so as to apprehend the unconscious process. But now it seems timely to reestablish the relation between them. An aesthetic informed by the psychological goes beyond taste and formal qualities, and informs, as Lowenfeld and Brittain claim, perception, self-expression and self-development. "The basic affordance of a work of art is that of being readily perceived" (Arnheim, 1992, p. 12). During artistic expression sense is made out of chaos because of aesthetics.

*Psychological aesthetics* take into account that, in art therapy, formal features and composition in an art work are equally as important as the condition of its making, intention, symbolism, and the therapeutic relationship (MacLagan, 1999). Even the materials themselves have aesthetic qualities as they give form to feelings of selfhood (Robbins, 1989).

"A complete work of any medium becomes art only when it touches us as a living truth. This happens when it is an authentic expression of the artist. ... When symbolic form includes multiple levels of communication and transcends its individual parts to communicate a larger meaning, it approaches the level of aesthetic communication" (Robbins, 1987a, cited in 1989, p. 44).

Arnheim ( in an interview by McNiff, 1979) said that he wished to believe that a work of art done in art therapy, even though it may be lacking in visual and compositional qualities, nonetheless may be considered to be aesthetic because of a powerful expressiveness.

The ability of the art therapist to perceive and recognize aesthetic qualities can help ground interpretation (MacLagan, 1999). A trained art therapist has the capacity, it is hoped, to be able to read the formal qualities and composition in a work of art in such a way that they become an "anchor" (MacLagan, 1999, p. 309) thus forestalling the possibility of "wild analysis". Perhaps it is not so much an interpretation that the art therapist is looking for but meaning (MacLagan, 1999). While knowledge of symbols of the unconscious and psychological theory help the art therapist assist an individual to discover meaning in his or

her artwork, the art therapist must also bring into the art therapy room/studio the artist's discerning eye. The art itself can reveal, through its aesthetic qualities, a deeper knowledge of the meaning that lies within it. The art therapist witnesses the inner substance of a person as it is aesthetically arranged, rearranged, restored, integrated and transformed. This is the aesthetic experience that leads to an understanding of the inner self (Robbins, 1989) and individual development that the art therapist can share with a person in therapy.

Rudolf Arnheim's (in a interview by McNiff, 1979) operational definition of art therapy is that the art product, no matter how carefully it has been made or how "good" or "beautiful" or "successful", is to be considered primarily in relation to the person who makes it, the important thing being how the person has benefited from the process of making it. The obvious and very good reason to insist upon the subjectivity of aesthetics is, of course, because it reflects an individual's inner world (MacLagan, 1999). Each person's genuine expression of truth and beauty is personal.

### ***Art Therapy and Individual Expression***

Rubin (1974), finds no dilemma of product or process: for her, the person is foremost. Without the person, the process/product dialectic becomes academic. "It is not 'art for art sake' but 'art for the sake of the person' which makes the only human(e) sense to me" (p. 255). Nonetheless, it is through the art process and the individual's perception of the product that development occurs in art therapy (McNiff, 1975). Art therapy endeavours to deepen perception and foster integration and understand the inner reality of an individual (Robbins, 1989; 1987b). It is person, product and process, each informing the other.

The complexities and seeming contradictions of the inner life can be expressed in image and metaphor. No matter how alarming or terrifying or strange, the image has the ability show one where one hurts (Moon, 1997; McNiff, 1994). Growth and development become possible because the art therapist provides a place and a way to contain the emotions and pain connected with proceeding through an unencountered developmental stage (Robbins, 1987b).

The power of images lies in that they not only picture who one is but also who one may become (McNiff, 1992). "The core of a patient's self, therefore, consists of formless

energy emanating from his center and moving toward form and structure” (Robbins. 1989, p. 9). From this centre, this inner self, radiates an ever evolving, clarifying organization of forms and metaphors uniting the inner and outer lives, consciousness and unconsciousness (Robbins. 1989).

In object-relation terms, art therapy can help individuals develop a sense of self that he or she did not have in the early stages of life by allowing them to exhibit themselves to an approving therapist. From the narrative perspective, the understanding and concern of the therapist helps the client develop a personal story as it emerges through the art helping it unfold and grow into something that offers new possibilities to the client/storyteller (Riley, 1997). The humanistic art therapist engages the person in art therapy through unconditional positive regard for the way the image and the individual express that person’s unique experience of the human condition.

Humanism, psychoanalytic theory, postmodernism narrative are all different lenses through which images can be perceived in art therapy. Their objective is the same: to foster personal growth. Whether the stress is on the relationship or the art, the individual, tapping into the creative impulse can reorganize, reinvent and rebuild perceptions about the self and others. This will lead to greater self-understanding (Malchiodi & Cattaneo, 1988) and a better defined and subsequently more “flexible self” (Perdoux, 1996, p. 287). “As an art therapist, one hopes to enable the client through visual expression to achieve insights about oneself and one’s world” (Malchiodi & Cattaneo, 1988, p. 57).

#### ***Case Example: Edward***

In a large urban hospital, I worked with a Edward, a four year old boy, who was extremely anxious and fearful of many things: leaving his home, separating from his mother, being with other people. Certain foods, toys, pieces of clothing could send him into a frenzy of anxiety. On the rare occasion when he spoke, it was in a tiny voice. It was very difficult for him to attend preschool. Initially, I worked with him and his mother in an art therapy group. In this parent-child dyad group the parents and children worked together for half an hour on an art therapy project. Afterwards the parents left and the children played in the therapeutic playroom. For many weeks I observed Edward. He continually played alone with a doll house. Although he was silent, he made the people and furnishings in the house

crash and bang violently. Little progress was being made and individual art therapy was recommended. After a few (silent) sessions of painting, I asked Edward if he wanted to make a house. His face lit up in what was the beginning of a radiant unfolding of feeling and expression.

*Figure 1: Edward's house.*



He spent a few weeks painting a cardboard box and affixing a cardboard tube to the top for a chimney. He began to play with his house knocking it around and crashing it onto the floor. Occasionally it would break and he would fix it with one of the many rolls of tape I keep in the art therapy room. Bit by bit he began to speak. One day he tore the chimney off the roof and turned it into a "fireblaster". He shot at the house making lots of loud noises to represent explosions. Every so often he would stop and listen for he could hear his mother talking in the waiting room. He then would look at me and say, "That's my Mom" with a big smile, and go back to blasting the house, confident that Mom was surviving the attack, I presumed. During one session, I showed him how to make a person out of a tongue depressor by drawing a simple face on it. I played with it as an example of how to expand his play. At first he didn't seem to know what to make of this idea but soon he was making his own until he had several residents for the house. With these "people" (and a dog) he acted out all sorts of fights. The dog was the "trouble dog" who messed everything up and ate everything in the house. I wondered if the dog was an alter-ego for himself. Eventually he made himself, or rather two of himself - "Edward" and "the real Edward" the latter standing outside the house and describing the action inside. As the sessions progressed, he became more and more verbal and confident and grown up. At one point he threw away some tape that had gotten all stuck together in one of his repairs, calling it "super-duper babyish". After that he handled the materials with more confidence.

Edward began to speak in a louder voice and play with the children in his play therapy group. Although Edward still has obstacles to overcome in his life, I feel that the individual development he underwent in the art therapy helped him and will continue to help him handle his difficulties with more ease. Making his own objects to play with gave him, I believe, a greater sense of empowerment than he felt playing with readymade objects. He had more control over them and could fix them if they broke. Besides that, they were the result of his personal artistic expression, an aesthetic product of his choices fed by his intuition, imagination and unconscious. The objects, how he made them, the way he played with them, and the stories he told with them were a direct expression of his creative impulse. Since he could make them in a safe place with someone he had learned to trust, he was able to express and tolerate his strong feelings through them. Because of all this he enlarged his



capacity to involve himself in relationships with his family and other children.

Objects no longer speak in our society the way they did in simpler times (Arnheim, 1992). So many of the objects we use and especially the ones children play with, are made of artificial materials and reflect another's or a corporate aesthetic. Rather than make things, we consume them. Because of this objects have lost a lot of their potential for connecting us with our inner selves and each other. It is through art that objects may speak to us again (Arnheim, 1992). An art therapist can help renew the ability to perceive, create and use objects in a way that gives them and one's personal life meaning. Aesthetics is the giving of life to objects, energy to form (Robbins, 1987a).

Edward developed himself through the creative actions of his art and play. But I think that his development also relied on trust. As he learned to trust me as the "good-enough" therapist, he was able to ruthlessly attack his house, and the object survived. By acting on cues supplied by Edward, I was able to encourage him to also trust himself and his choices. The therapist, like the good-enough mother provides mirroring and allows the spontaneous gesture which is the true self in action (Abram, p.214). In Art Therapy we can have an image of that spontaneous gesture! Art can provide transformation or a healing effect that occurs because the primary creative impulse that was ignored or undernourished in infancy is stimulated, encouraged and developed.

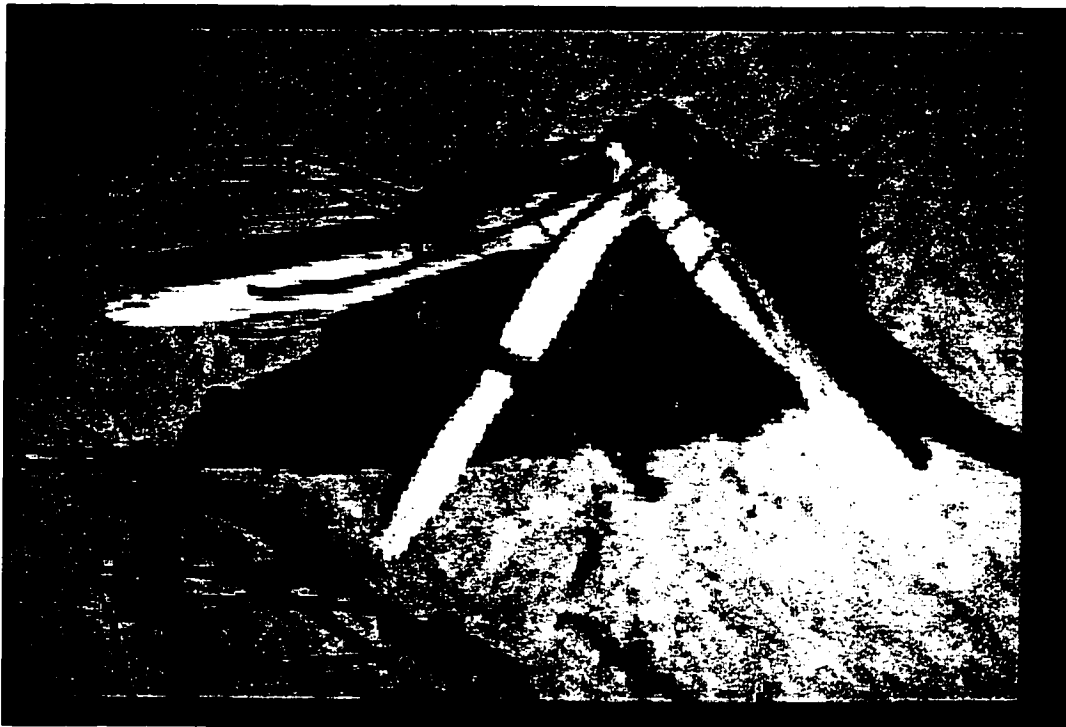
From a narrative perspective, Edward developed through the retelling of his life's story, the story of his experience of life up until now. The social and cultural environment of his home and the playroom had not adequately provided him with materials to do that. He was able to use his unique creative impulse to express personal truth in the art objects and in the stories he told about them. The therapist just helps the client trust his/her story and expand it into something healthy and helpful for themselves. Art is "the actualization of a person's biography" (Neiderland & Sholevar, 1981, p. 84) or a "reflected life" (Ortega y Gasset, 1968, p. 24). In this way ego development parallels creative development (Neiderland & Sholevar, 1981). As one faces problems in the art making process, one faces the problems of one's life. And the humanist that I like to think I am offered him a relationship based on unconditional positive regard.

### ***Images and Objects made by Individuals***

Here are other examples of images and objects that are expressions of individuality and a personal inner life :

*Figure 2: Natural Materials Sculpture.*

This is an abstract object made of natural materials in an adolescent art workshop. The beauty of this art activity is that no special art expertise is needed to make this kind of sculpture and the person makes something out of natural materials thus relating his/her creative impulse with nature. Each participant's sculpture was unique, inspired by the materials and the individual's reaction to them.



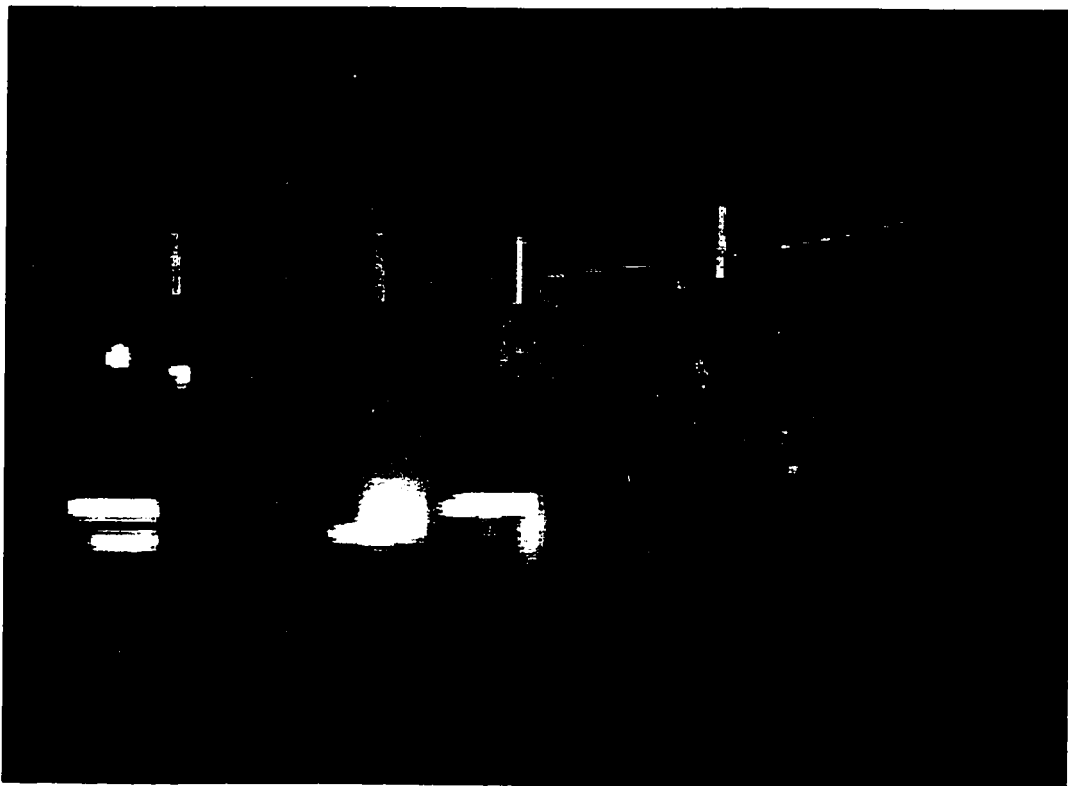
*Figure 3: Little chair.*

This was made by a child in therapeutic Kindergarten class with his father. He later painted an "M" on it that I believe stood for "Mummy" whom he missed very much. He was able to use the art therapy session to make his own object that expressed his deep feelings and his desire to have a place for his mother in his life. He was often depressed in earlier sessions but in this one he was cheerful and confident. I believe it was because he had discovered an object he could make that reflected his inner needs and desires.



*Figure 4: Mittens.*

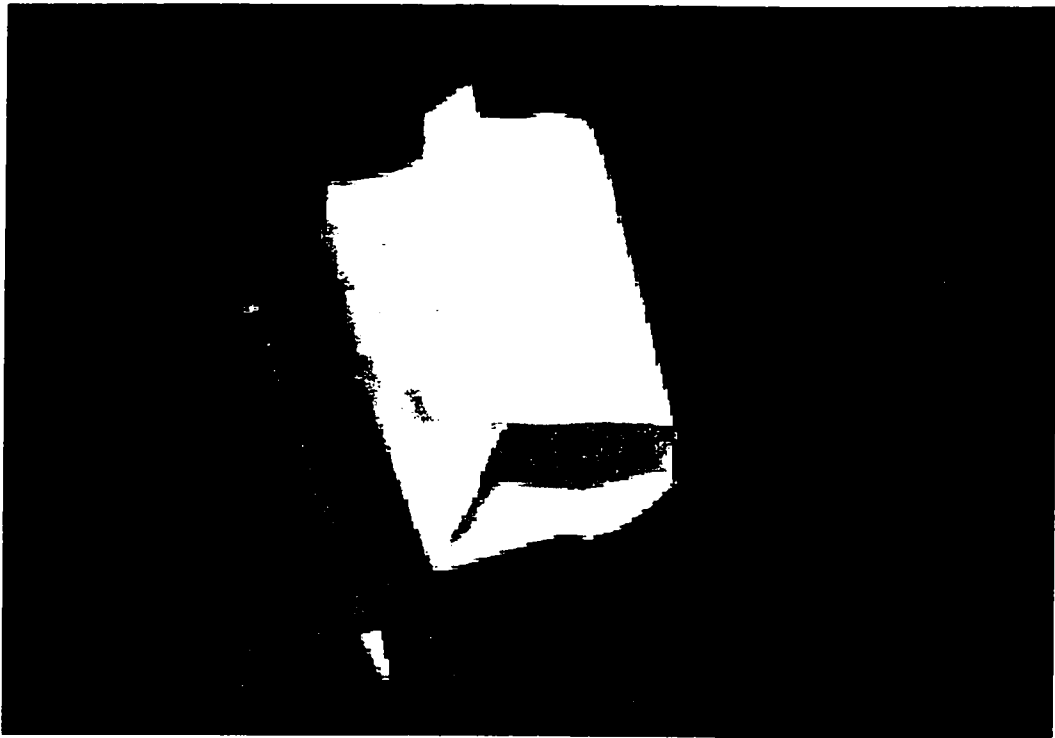
These paper mittens were made by mothers and toddlers in a parent-child art therapy session. They painted the patterns on the paper together and then traced their hands to make "mittens". Even at an early age, an individual may express him/herself. These little objects represent the early individuation process. Through the shape of his/her hand the child expresses his/her identity separate from mother. And yet the activity was done in relationship with the mother.



*Figure 5: Shields.* Six boys made these cardboard collage shields in a therapeutic Kindergarten class. Shields can be said to represent protection for the self. Each boy made the same object but decorated it in a way that expressed his own individuality.

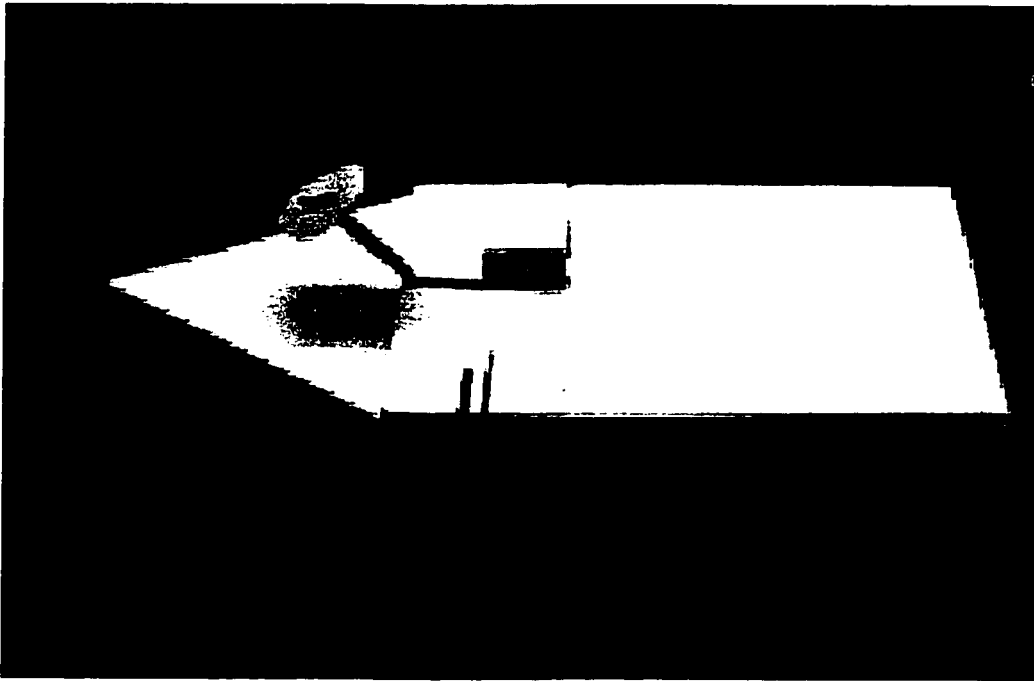


*Figure 6: Little paper house.* This rather fragile house made by an intellectually handicapped man in an art therapy group. The house often represents the self. He called this "Jesus' house", perhaps a reference for his wish for the birth of his true self. He worked very hard on it and was often frustrated and dissatisfied with the result.



*Figure 7: Boat.*

This foamcore boat was made by the same man - this time with a little help and advice from the art therapist who introduced him to new materials and new techniques. Because of this he was able to make a stronger structure. He was extremely excited and happy making this, often clapping his hand against mine in a comradely way. Through his relationship with me and his own efforts he was able to make an much stronger self object. The increased ability to use art materials and tools also gave him more confidence. He burned his fingers slightly (we had used a low heat glue gun) and said on the way out the door at the last session, with a smile, "This art therapy is painful!"



*Figure 6: The Sun.*

This powerful image was made by a ten year old boy in a series of art workshops with a “Sun” theme. The brush strokes and composition are very strong and are examples of individualistic aesthetic expression.





*Figure 9: Girl skipping.*

This is a spontaneous drawing by a ten year old girl. The expression on the child's face is similar to the one on the Sun's suggesting a wish for connection with the power that the Sun represents. The skipping rope is touching the Sun affording either protection or connection. One could interpret that the child is connecting herself through her play with both the Earth under her feet and the creative power that the Sun represents.



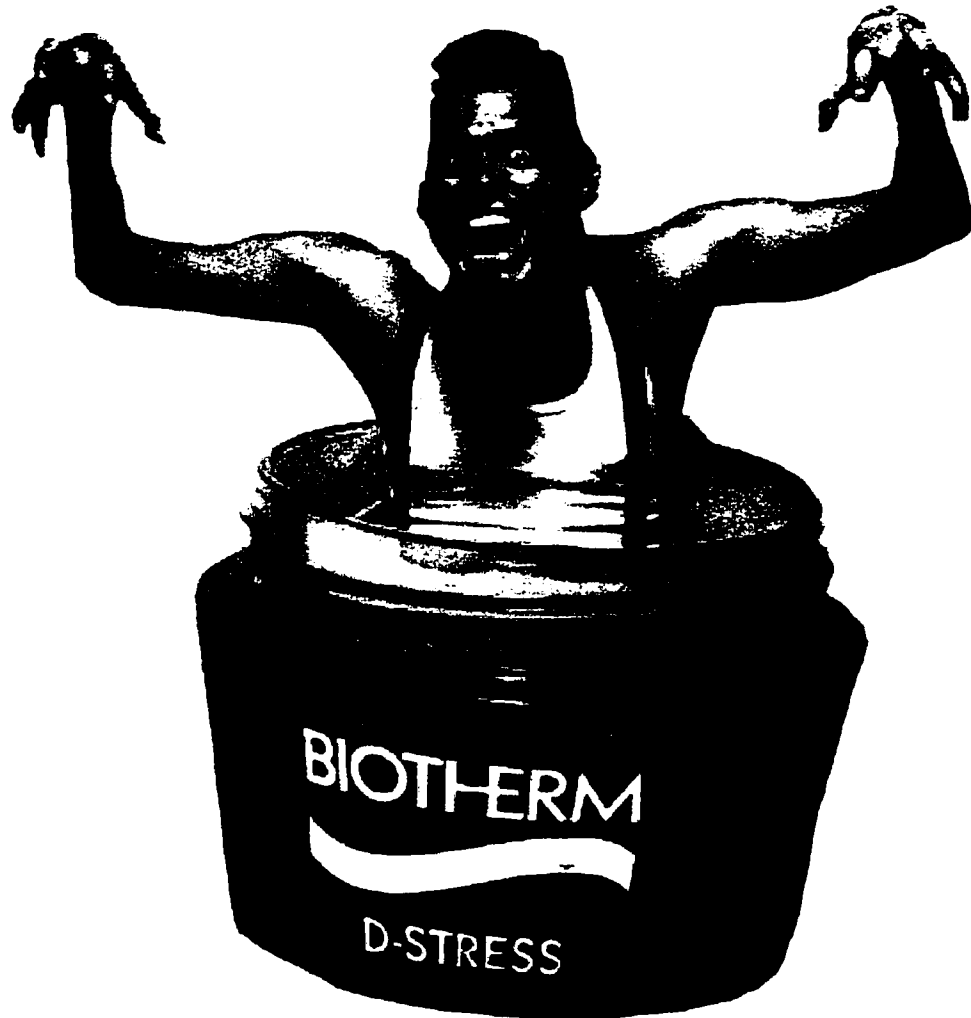
*Figure 10: Self-expression.*

Aesthetically and symbolically rich painting done by thirteen year old girl in an adolescent “art and self-expression” workshop. This was done after a meditation and her intention was to express the feelings it inspired. She was able to express personal feelings in her application of the paint and choice of colours. The circle is an ancient symbol of the self and this one is full of variety and at the same time centred, and the painting is balanced.



*Figure 11: Stress.*

Collage done by seventeen year old boy using advertising and entertainment industry images to make his own image and express his own message. Rather than responding in the way the advertiser anticipated, he used his individual response to the image of the face cream to create an new idea. Rather than being manipulated by the media, he manipulated it and constructed his own meaning.



“Art therapy offers the possibility for psychological space, or that which is created through the interactions of two individuals, to be reorganized by mirroring or complementarity ... In the creative act, the various representations of the patients’ world are shaped and reflected through artistic form” (Robbins, 1987b, p.67). Development of an individual’s ability to perceive, of the aesthetic, of the expression of an unconscious inner world through the creative process in art therapy, taking into account both the empathic person-oriented therapeutic relationship and the artistic expression, helps an individual become who he or she was born able to be.

### ***Art Therapy: The Individual and Society***

“Since human society has existed, the arts have helped man to reconcile the eternal conflict between the individual’s instinctual urges and the demands of society (Kramer, 1958, p. 6). Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982) point out that our society has made unprecedented material gains based on the manufacture and consumption of objects. But the resulting consumerism overlooks, undervalues and even denies human worth and the deepest needs and feelings of the individual. Today we are especially susceptible to the advertising industry’s claims and suggestions that we need specific objects to be happy. Once satisfied making and/or finding our own objects we find they pale beside the images of manufactured “supernormal objects” (Kramer, Williams, Henley and Gerity, p.45, cited in Gerity, 2001) presented in the media and stores. “Through external imagery, our inner life is accessed and our feelings are manipulated, reprocessed and sold back to us” (Mander, cited in Gerity, 2001, p. 45). Our deepest impulses and feelings are tapped into so that we feel we really need the advertised object in order to be happy. Our inner and outer needs have become fused and confused, and our aesthetic constructed for us providing an illusion of self-fulfillment resulting in what John Ralston Saul calls “false individualism” (2002, p. 179). Reality is being replaced by virtual reality, achievement by diversion and we have fallen into a collective “gilded depression” (Saul, 2002, p. 4).

Lani Gerity (2001) observes a growing creative and artistic inertia amongst the individuals in her practice. She cites Edith Kramer who ascribes the reluctance to work through it to regain enthusiasm to a “false fatigue” (p.44). The self-discipline required to develop one’s creative potential is a lost art, discouraged by a work, profit and pleasure

oriented culture (Moon, 1997). But art can help us reclaim ourselves (Gerity, 2001). Art therapy can have a healing effect by providing time, space, materials and relationship - an opportunity to reconnect with one's creativity and inner self. "We need a certain amount of freedom to make choices, we need a certain amount of protection from the bombardment of virtual reality to express our inner environment and to feel real in the world" (Gerity, 2001, p. 49). The art therapy room or studio becomes the transitional space that fosters the conditions for authentic and creative self-expression (Wood, 2000; Perdoux, 1996; Moon, 1990; Cane, 1951) where one can explore personal images and make one's own objects. There one can make art that reflects the deepest of feelings, the darkest impulses and fiercest drives, ecstasy and pain.

Only when enough individuals in a society have matured enough to stop projecting their dark side onto others will those individuals and society also discover their own goodness (Moon, 1996). We have come to learn, from the media for the most part, that convenience and distraction are good. Pain and struggle are to be avoided at all costs. It has become unacceptable that life be difficult - it has to be easy (Moon, 1990). But we each must embrace struggle and turmoil, not evade it; find meaning in everyday life, alone and with others; restore and renew the imagination. It will save us and our society (Moon, 1997).

Although the media can shape us in ways we are unaware of, it also gives us images of peace protests, equal rights movements, a glimpse of life in other cultures, the opportunity to see and hear and learn from great and creative individuals, and more. The twentieth century brought unparalleled freedom of expression. Let us answer the call from pioneer art educators and therapists, from humanists and social activists, and let it inform our profession so that we may use art to help individuals express themselves and develop - to be able to change and adapt as self and social awareness increases. Development through art can increase and renew "the capacity for action, experience, redefinition, and stability in a society filled with changes, tensions and uncertainties" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 23). There is an increasing call from art therapists to work at a community level, to develop environmental and global consciousness (O'Connor, 1989), to work with other community

leaders to “address social concerns and community building” (Warner, 2001, p. 14). to develop and become involved in community projects that promote “community, wholeness, rootedness and relationship to the inner, the interpersonal, the “big” world” (Fryszberg, 2000, p.26).

Individual and societal evolution depends upon the development of human beings’ innate ability to be creative and relate authentically to an *other* while preserving individuality (Garai, 1987). This furthering of individual development is the true purpose of art (Cane, 1951) and art therapy.

“The goal of ... a transitional relationship is self-healing and world-healing, that is, generating the sense that one is good enough to be alive and that the world is good enough to live in. The artistic, transitional point is to relate ‘the inner world’s richness’ to the ‘reliably objective’ [Winnicott] world , without losing a sense of inwardness and the world’s reliability. Only then do the inner and outer world seem good enough” (Kuspit, 1993, p.298).

## Conclusion

“The interest and passion for humanity, self-dedication to the problem of man ... are concerned with both aspects, that of the personal and inward and also that of the external arrangement of human life in society”.

(Thomas Mann, 1933, cited in Bullock, 1985, p. 159).

From the first symbolic representation made by a cave dweller, to the satellite TV pictures that fire political debate, humankind has used images to find meaning and gain a better understanding of our relationship with the world we find ourselves in. Great writers and artists and, before them, holy sages understood the inner life of human beings. Myths and philosophies continue to speak to us. The great lesson of the troubadours and Grail legend was that individuals could consciously take control over their biological urges, their instincts and drives. Individual self expression grew out of the choice to love. Love became a creative act requiring effort (Frye, 1992). Emotional struggle was embraced. Love, bliss, ecstasy: libidinal energy fed individual expression that took into consideration a responsible relationship with an other. The hallmarks of this relationship were human dignity and communication. Through the Renaissance, Enlightenment and Romantic Age, self-awareness, reason and emotion nourished the ideals of individuality and human worth. In the Modern age, Freud and his successors explained the human mind, and there arose the concept of freedom for all. Self consciousness became political consciousness (Berman, 1970). It was discovered that consciousness of the self and its possibilities can free us from undue societal control. We can guide and be guided by personal experience. From the very beginning of the human urge towards consciousness, art and life have corresponded with each other.

And yet I find it dissatisfying to look at the development of the concept of the individual and the parallel development of artistic expression in the convention of a straight line. Instead, I like to think of human development as an unfolding and a taking shape - a gradual opening of the human heart as the expression of our innermost and quintessential experience takes place during the creative process. We do not move forwards and backwards between nature and technology, primitivism and classicism, concrete and abstract, innocence and cynicism, barbarism and civilization. All past human experience feeds the

present. None of it can be discarded. The best of the past and the present reverberates through each one of us at once when we engage our creativity to develop into who we were born able to be. In looking to see the commonalities in different theories and world views, we must not seek dogmatism or a shallow eclecticism. Rather we ought to try to perceive the manner in which they inform and endorse each other as they relate to one another within an ever-changing cultural context and philosophical evolution (Aron, 1999). Western civilization is on a threshold now. Its influence has reached, to a greater or lesser degree, just about every corner of the globe. And in turn it has been increasingly influenced by other cultures. Aboriginal respect for the planet, Eastern religious philosophy, the growing and undeniable awareness of the differences between the rich and poor, global trade: these all inform our present civilization. The story of humanity and the human longing for meaning and happiness is built upon the strengths of philosophical, psychological, artistic, and personal intentions. I feel that we should not be looking at what I perceive to be the false dichotomies of humanism/psychoanalysis, modernism/postmodernism, psychoanalysis/postmodernism, postmodernism/humanism, art/science, and so on. The dispute is between humanism and corporatism.

As I write the threat of war hangs over the world. Throughout the twentieth century two world wars, economic depression and social upheaval occurred at the same time as the good life was touted for all. A struggle ensued and continues to ensue between the forces of corporatism and humanism. The choice between them is not only to be made on a social level but on an individual one. The artist has always been willing to struggle with the truth and attempt to show it to others. This is not the work only of the artist-hero/ artist-saviour but the work of each of us who chooses it: who elects to seek out the creative spirit and engage it; to feel discomfort and take up the struggle; to seek the truth, personal and philosophical; to grow with the process and take responsibility for ourselves and respond to society and each other with respect and honesty. Each human being has the innate capacity to be creative and have a genuine relationship with an *other* and still preserve individuality (Moustakas, 1977, cited in Garai 1987).

So I think I found what I was looking for, in the story of Edward and the story of humankind. I have only had a glimpse of each. But it was enough to show me that the



search for meaning which led to the discovery of individual truth was sparked by the original creative impulse, and it continues to lead us us to consciousness - of ourselves and the human condition. I see that we are at a crossroads. Western civilization is threatened by the forces of corporatism and John Ralston Saul calls it the "Unconscious Civilization" (1997). Loren Eiseley (cited in Campbell, 1968) tells us not to expect inventions to save us, nor social utopias. Reason has brought us to understand individuality but has become counterproductive (Saul, 1997; 2002; Bullock, 1985) as bureaucracy and materialism threaten to overwhelm the individual. I have seen that it is not rational or sentimental conformity that satisfies human beings but that it is through one's own developed creativity and individuality that one may find happiness and fulfillment. In my research I have discovered that the long and uncertain quest of the human race towards consciousness and civilization started and ends in the inner world. The struggles of existence, our inborn instincts, fear and longing lead both to destruction and creation. Sages, scholars, poets, artists, scientists have left us a legacy of truth and beauty.

Growth encompasses all previous experience. Let us, whatever culture and cultures we are heirs to, learn from the past and each other. The mature individual can do this. That is why it is so important to foster individual development: so we can feel fulfilled and productive, so we can contribute to our society and culture, and leave behind us whatever wonderful, helpful ideas and objects we can so others in turn can evolve. We human beings, in our peculiar capacity to project our inner world onto the outer, may one day be able to humanize the world with the best of what we find within and imagine it into "something like a materialized soul" (Ortega Y Gasset, 1968, p. 184).

"The humanist art therapist is ... deeply concerned about the future of the world and the challenges mankind will face while we move into the third millennium" (Garai, 1987). If we think of "mankind" as individual human beings with a shared humanness and that each one of them deserves to be who he or she was born able to be, it is daunting, but it is the only way to think. As I end this paper, it appears to me that art therapy is in the unique position to understand and foster the inner creative life of individuals. I have learned specifically that individual development occurs when people make their own objects and images as good-enough art; that knowledge of how the inner life functions and knowledge

of how it may authentically be expressed through art equips the art therapist to hold up the two-sided banner of individual development and civilization. "To be involved in some way with the arts is to have access to that pool of knowledge which is both shared and eternal" (Saul, 2002, p. 41). Art therapists must be a voice for truth and beauty, creativity and peace, the eternal birthrights of every individual. In our practices, we must champion and cultivate individual dignity and worth, and work to make our civilization conscious. In writing this paper, I have not only found out how the concept of the individual evolved, and how a person can develop through creativity and art, but I have also come to understand the implications of this knowledge for the future: for individuals and society, and for art therapy as a profession. Above all, the creative impulse of every human being to be who she or he is able to be must be nourished.

"As soon as it is light in man, it is no longer night out"  
(Schiller, cited in Cane, 1951, p. 303).

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## Appendix: Consent Forms

## CONSENT FORM

*Authorization for photography, video recordings, audio recordings and the use of case material related to the arts therapies.*

*Authorisation pour photographie, cinématographie, enregistrements sonores et l'utilisation du matériel clinique au sujet d'arts-thérapies.*

*I, the undersigned* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Je, soussigné(e)* \_\_\_\_\_

*Authorize* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Autorise* \_\_\_\_\_

*to take/use any:*  
*à prendre/utiliser:*

*YES*  
*OUI*

*NO*  
*NON*

*photographs/photographies*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*video recordings/cinématographie*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*audio recordings/enregistrements sonores*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*case material/matériel clinique*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*that therapists deem appropriate, and to utilize and publish them for educational purposes, provided that reasonable precautions be taken to conserve confidentiality.*  
*que les thérapeutes jugeront opportun et à utiliser et publier pour des fins éducatives, à la condition que des précautions raisonnables soient prises pour que soit conservée la confidentialité.*

*However, I make the following restriction(s):*  
*J'émetts cependant les restrictions suivantes:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Participant/Signature du(de la) participant(e)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Guarantor/Signature du garant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Witness to Signature/ Témoin à la signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

I the undersigned, \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ beneficiary 14 years and over   ☐ father   ☐ mother  
☐ other holder of parental authority, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Authorize \_\_\_\_\_ of The Montreal Children's Hospital

Department of \_\_\_\_\_ to get:

☐ Photographs   ☐ Films   ☐ Tape-recordings   ☐ Videotapes  
☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

However I make the following restrictions : these audio-visual documents should be used only for the purposes chosen below.

Please check the appropriate ones:

☐ clinical documentation   ☐ publication   ☐ public relations   ☐ court  
☐ for government health care   ☐ educational/teaching   ☐ research  
☐ specify other purposes \_\_\_\_\_

Furthermore in order to preserve visual anonymity I request that the eyes be masked.  
Check yes or no in response to this clause.   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signatory: beneficiary or authorized person

\_\_\_\_\_  
y   m   d  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness to the signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
y   m   d  
Date

N.B.: It must be assured that the persons signing this form are authorized to do so in accordance with the legislative texts in force. Also please note that if in the future you want to amend this authorization form, it can be done in writing or verbally with the medical records department of this hospital.

MRC approved 03/98

Version française disponible.

White copy: medical records, yellow copy: authorization