MARIN COUNTY PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
A Chapter of the California Psychological Association

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marincountypsych.org

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Mission Statement
The purpose of the Marin County Psychological Association is to promote human welfare through diffusion and utilization of psychological knowledge, to increase public understanding of psychology as a science and as a profession, to promote and maintain high standards of professional ethics, conduct, education and training of psychologists, to promote fellowship among psychologists in Marin County, and to cooperate with other professionals and lay organizations in achieving mutual objectives.

Dates To Remember
Fri., August 8: MCPA Board Meeting
August: MCPA soiree on Collaborative Divorce. Details TBA.
Sat., September 20: Annual MCPA Continuing Ed Workshop, Corte Madera (see p. 22)
Fri., October 10: MCPA Board Meeting
Fri., December 12: 7-11 pm. Holiday Party, Seafood Peddler, San Rafael
Fri., January 9, 2009: Annual MCPA Business Meeting, San Rafael Joe’s

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27…… NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND ADVERTISING RATES…. We’d like to hear from you! Please consider submitting an article or review for the next MCPA Newsletter.

Next Deadline for MCPA Newsletter submissions:
Friday, August 15th, 2008.

Please email your newsletter submissions to: MCPAnewsletter@verizon.net
President’s Message
Beth Cooper Tabakin, Ph.D.

How can I make the most of the time I have left as president? I joined MCPA because I care about people, community and well being. I joined the board because, I was feeling isolated in private practice and wanted more contact with colleagues.

I stepped into a leadership role partly because I believe that some of the best leaders learn to lead by following. I wanted to practice this principle by first experimenting with the MCPA board. I believed that when people are free to choose the nature and extent of their contribution, the whole organization would benefit. This meant I had to change tradition. I knew I would get good feedback because my board is a group of extraordinary people who are also psychologists and researchers.

Prior to my presidency, board time was used for committee reports and presenting ideas for ‘board approval’ prior to taking action. My job, as I saw it, was to elicit ideas and ask how the board could help the initiator bring the concept to fruition. In other words, I wanted to learn and lead by following. Organizers choose the speakers, venues, activities, topics and format they desired to promote. This year, we went bird watching, hiked down Mt. Tam, walked and talked on the bike path along Corte Madera Creek, enjoyed soirees in people’s homes covering topics such as medication evaluation and collaborative divorce. Dinner/Speaker CEU events covered topics including infertility treatment alternatives and some of the psychological implications, the price of privilege, and what is new in the world of psychotropic medication evaluation and treatment. Coming this September 20th we will learn about drug, alcohol and sex addiction evaluation and treatment options in a full day event.

I have been intrigued and delighted about the topics my committee chairs choose. MCPA has covered many bases and has introduced authors that have appeared on Oprah, written books or are outstanding and highly recommended community private practitioners.

What can I do with the time I have left in my presidency? I don’t know, you tell me. After many years of excellent board service, Ann Buscho would like to retire from her current position as secretary and we are seeking a replacement. She has generously volunteered to train the new person. If this interests you, contact Claudia Perez, Ph.D., or me and we will meet with you to talk about the process involved in applying to be a board member. Hey students out there, if you are reading this, I hope you too will join MCPA and get involved with your Marin colleagues.
Any and all ideas are welcome. I encourage you to contact me at drbetht@comcast.net and/or join us at our next event.

Being board president has been more work than I imaged and more rewarding than I imagined. I am very grateful for the ways it is stretching me and for the new skills I have learned (that I didn’t know I wanted). I am especially humbled and awed by my amazingly bright, warm and talented colleagues. Thank you for allowing me into your worlds.

President Elect’s Message
Claudia Perez, Ph.D.

The year is flying by and I am approaching my leadership position in full. I have been taking in all I can and hope to use what has worked so well....thanks to Beth. But with several Board members retiring and a search for a new President Elect and new Chair positions beginning, it is also a time for growth and change. I encourage you to consider joining in and making a difference. I am excited by the challenges that lie ahead but know I can't do it alone. The camaraderie is so necessary in keeping the organization successful. I have so enjoyed and been energized by the colleagues I have worked with thus far, so I am hopeful it can only get better. We have generously been offered a large meeting room for monthly get togethers beginning late this year. Beth and I are brainstorming as to how to make it most beneficial both academically and socially. Again, I welcome suggestions and thoughts as the organization is yours and is what we make of it. Wishing you all a great summer. A get together is in the plans.
Michael White was the founder of narrative therapy, a significant contribution to psychotherapy and family therapy, and a source of techniques adopted by other approaches. White was a practicing social worker and family therapist, was co-director of the Dulwich Centre in Adelaide, South Australia, and was author of several books of importance in the field of family therapy and narrative therapy. In January 2008, White set up the Adelaide Narrative Therapy Centre to provide counseling services and training workshops relevant to work with individuals, couples, families, groups and communities and to provide a context for exploring recent developments relevant to narrative practice.

Michael White was also particularly known for his work with children and Indigenous Aboriginal communities, as well as with schizophrenia, anorexia/bulimia, men's violence, and trauma.¹

¹ Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. *Michael White (psychotherapist).*
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_White_%28psychotherapist%29
With his colleague, David Epston, Michael White explored the power of eliciting new stories of people's lives, and new interpretations or meaning, to open space for dramatic change. Michael worked with people with severe mental illness and demonstrated phenomenal outcomes. Their technique was explained in an influential 1990 book, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*, and has since become known as narrative therapy. More information about narrative therapy is available at [www.narrativeapproaches.com](http://www.narrativeapproaches.com). Michael’s most recent book, *Maps of Narrative Practice*, is available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

Michael White came to Northern California many times to present workshops since 1987. Many Bay Area therapists were profoundly influenced by his innovative, strengths-based, client-experience-centered approaches. He was also known as a "kind and gentle" man by all who met him. Michael White died of a heart attack on April 5, 2008 in San Diego. He was 59.

What follows is a transcript of the beautiful eulogy written and delivered by David Epston at Michael White’s memorial service in Australia. David granted permission for this eulogy to be read at the memorial service held in Mill Valley at the Tamalpais Valley Community Center on Saturday, June 14, 2008. He has kindly allowed us to reprint it here.

Michael was a very humble and unassuming person.... I am quite sure wherever he is now watching over these proceedings he would be very discomfited by the outpourings of shock, grief and mourning over his death on the one hand and the reverence in which he has been held and tributes paid to him from Quito in Ecuador to Seoul in South Korea, from Moscow in Russia to Capetown in the Republic of South Africa. Michael's worst fear was of hagiographies...I remember when he told me how worried about this he was, I had to go and look up the word...it is the literary genre to do with the lives of the saints I learned. In fact, I suspect that out of respect for Michael, many of us deferred to his wishes for anonymity and only spoke of such matters in private or at least far away from Michael's hearing. I know I certainly was one of those but I expect there were many like me. He cringed in the face of what became a version of celebrity in the world of psychotherapy in which he came to be regarded as one of the most significant influences on his generation. I guesstimate the books he either co-authored or authored have sold well over 100,000 copies in 11 languages and once again I guesstimate well over 30 separate translations.

Now that Michael is not here to censure us, I wanted to speak in the merest outlines of his life's work and do so by way of celebration and honour. No one I know was more ready to honour others than Michael and made 'honoring' a catchphrase...let me give you one of a thousand possible stories from our friendship.... Michael was an extraordinary cyclist....his fierce determination was matched by his physical capabilities.... after all, in his early 50s, Michael came out of the water in his first full triathlon first here swimming against semi-professional 20 year olds-we would cycle up from sea level in Adelaide to the summit of Mt Lofty - 0 to 750 metres taking over an hour and a half... not surprisingly, I would finish some time after him and I mean some time. He would always be waiting for me thrilled to see me as if I came in first. "Eppy" he would say, "you rode so well...slow and steady...I have just got to learn to ride like you do". A stranger may have found such comments feigned or even

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4 Ann Buscho, Ph.D., personal communication, June 19, 2008.
preposterous but if you knew Michael well, you knew that he really meant it. He really wanted to learn to ride like I did, even if it in other ways, it would have handicapped him considerably in any time trial. So tonight, I am going to speak without reference to Michael's restraints on how he wished to stand to one side of his ingenuity and at times his wizardry. I remember too that when some colleagues and I at John F. Kennedy University near Berkeley, California, where Michael and I both taught in the early to mid-90s decided that his 'body of published work' merited a doctorate and we, without informing him, proceeded to submit an application on his behalf. He did receive a D.Litt or Doctor of Human Letters in 1996. I was there that day and Michael, always expressing thanks to us, went through that day as if he had a sharp pebble in one or both of his sandals. To this day, I still am in two minds if we had done the right thing. Michael was too kind to say anything to the contrary, given that we were acting on our good intentions.

But to my way of thinking, Michael was an amateur philosopher...I don't mean amateur in the sense of amateur as a poor version of a professional but rather the older dictionary meaning of amateur- one who cultivates a thing as a pastime...it was always extraordinary how such an 'amateur' led the world of psychotherapy, etc into what John McLeod calls the post psychological, which he referred to "a greater or lesser degree they define therapy as primarily a social process than a psychological one...that we are seeing a historical and cultural shift in relation to the meaning and practice of therapy"...but I was taken by Michael's sheer delight with those ideas that unsettled or troubled the taken for granted and allowed for ways to live and think otherwise than had been previously permissible or even conceivable given that such ideas had gained the status of a 'truth'. First, he read the iconoclast Gregory Bateson, but tired after a few years of translating that into his practice/thinking and found Michel Foucault whose range of thought was vast beyond belief...who seemed able to turn just about everything upside down and if not upside down, at least to tilt that which had previously seemed so solid on to a precarious 90 degree angle. Michael caught the wave of postmodernism earlier than anyone else in the world of psychotherapy and the skillful surfer he was, he sailed to unknown seas on it, taking many of us along with him such was the sheer pleasure he took in 'deconstructing' the world around him. in other ways, his mind was like a posthole digger....his readings and re-readings of the middle Foucault , and each reading Michael seemed to savour more, were penetrating...always going deeper at the same time of the effects of his readings radiating out into his practice/teaching. What limited him was the time available for such a pursuit. This amateur cultivated his pastime late at night or on air planes between teaching assignments around the world. I often wondered if Michael had far more time to cultivate such a pastime what that would have meant to narrative therapy. But for me, who was a fellow traveller, it was remarkable to watch say what Michael did over a decade with Myerhoff's paper which I first gave him a copy of in 1983; or the book chapter of Foucault's power and knowledge which I Xeroxed off for him in 1985. To meet him later on for discussions or to teach together, it was fascinating to witness the inexorable expansion of these ideas over that vast divide of abstract theory to practice.

I have always considered Michael to merge in himself the rare combination of practitionership and scholarship but always ensuring that his practice came ahead of his scholarship. I do not consider that theory made Michael but rather Michael's own clinical ingenuity exploited theory- they were merely tools for his to think further than his inventions had led him so far.....there was always this backwards and forwards between his practice and his tools to think with. This radiated throughout his most recent and last book-maps of narrative practice
in which he took it upon himself to commentate on his own life as a practitioner-scholar. His clear intention was one that reflected his own modesty. That is to make his practice and the ideas that inform them as easily accessible as possible for us to appraise and if we seek to do so, to apprentice ourselves to.....in his humility, he often left out the genius and at times wizardry all those who had the opportunity to sit in on more than a few meetings or watched his videotapes have witnessed. Have you ever watched a video-tape of Michael's, mesmerized, like i have, and all of sudden realized that the conversation had passed over some sort of bridge between despair and renewed hope and you wondered if you had lost consciousness for a split second because you didn't notice that happening? Has the coin of the explicit heads been turned over to reveal the implicit tails so quickly that, like me, you swear it was some sort of magic? Michael in every workshop he ever taught and every book he wrote did his darndest to bequeath to us- his readers/students/workshop attendees- his practice/scholarship. He was generous to a fault. He tried to give away everything he had to each and every one of us who was willing to watch, listen or read. That was what made his last book- Maps of Narrative Practice - so significant to me. He used his 'maps' to reveal which way he was going and why he might head in that direction, at the same time warning us that there are so many directions he may very well have headed in. Or that you might head in.

Michael possessed a remarkable but gracious ease by which he could move between the large ideas of scholarship and the intimate and particular ideas of practice. Having known Michael for 27 years, I think few in our field can go from what seems to be one extreme to another without a lot of border stops in between. At each border stop, many others i know of get heavily taxed passing through each stop. By the time, say the scholar reaches his/her practice they seemingly have been so depleted, it is often hard to see much connection between the two. At times, the theory seems like sheer window-dressing. Michael, with only a few speed bumps to slow him down, traveled from one domain to the other seemingly unimpeded. I have always found this breathtaking and a testament to the conjunction of a remarkable spirit merging with an equally remarkable scholarship. In his last book, maps of NT, they were so woven together as to appear seamless. That is far from easy to achieve.

Either reading one of his transcripts or watching a videotaped/ meeting, which Michael considered to be an ethical responsibility to continually make available...to expose his practice and the ideas that informed it to the widest critique. I want you to imagines how hard this must have been for such a modest person. But Michael lived by a quote of Foucault's: We know what we do, we think we know what we think, but do we know what we do does?' Michael authorized his clients and the communities that petitioned him to have the first judgment; his professional colleagues came second. Still, he was willing to allow us to go to the very heart of his practice and judge for ourselves. You could almost palpably feel the relish with which Michael met the people who consulted him. And how they in turn savoured those meetings. It brought it home to me how enriching this work we do is to our lives- the 'two way street' that Michael unashamedly spoke to so often about. Michael always assumed that we were the lucky ones and I know he certainly considered himself to have always been the lucky one in such meetings. . I think Michael looked up to those he met.

Let me read you a quote from the philosopher Phillip Caputo in a book chapter about Michel Foucault in which he guesses what kind of therapist Foucault might have been, given that he
had no explicit therapeutic intentions whatsoever throughout his philosophical career.... but remember his first degree was in psychology and he did an internship in a public psychiatric institution in the 1950s in France.

He writes:  Such a therapy if Foucault invented one that is 'does not look at the mad as patients in the sense of objects of medical knowledge but as patiens, as ones who suffer greatly who suffer from their knowledge.  Such a patient would not be an object of knowledge but an author or subject of knowledge, one from whom we have something to learn.... He went on to surmise that for Foucault as a therapist 'the healing gesture meant to heal this suffering is not intended to explain it away or fill in the abyss but simply to affirm that they are not alone, that our common madness is a matter of degree, that we are all siblings in the 'same night of truth'.  The healing gesture is not to explain madness if that means to explain it away but to recognize it as a common fate, to affirm our community and solidarity.

Compare this to my abstract of a quote from Michael in 1993 was so telling about why he did what he has done...And what of solidarity?  I am thinking of a solidarity that is constructed by therapists who refuse to draw a sharp distinction between their lives and the lives of others, who refuse to marginalize those persons who seek help, by therapists who are constantly confronting the fact that if faced with the circumstances such that provide the context of troubles of others, they just might not be doing nearly as well themselves.

In 1981, I was asked to introduce Michael and his colleagues at a workshop on their work with people having psychotic experiences at the 2nd Australian family therapy conference in his hometown of Adelaide.  I recall sitting there stunned throughout...after all, I had spent two years of a master’s degree reading everything written at the time about family therapy several years before. Luckily for me, there wasn't that much to read in those days.  I recall it dawning upon me that I was witnessing the 'launching' of a new school of family therapy.  I don't quite know what possessed me but I insisted on standing up afterwards and formally announcing what seemed to me to be an ineluctable conclusion.  That a new school of family therapy had been 'born' and we had all witnessed that.  In 1983, after teaching together at the 4th conference, Michael, Cheryl and I had dinner together afterwards...I don't know how the conversation came up but Michael and I decided to become ‘brothers’...this was pre-aids so one of them suggested blood brotherhood...I had to beg off because I faint at the sight of anyone's blood, especially my own...but we decided to make our ideas and practice common property and vowed that we would never become rivals.  We did what we said we would do all these years up until he died.  In fact, we had made another vow late last year, one we can no longer keep...that we would meet a fortnight ago in Adelaide to sit down and plan our next project and book which undoubtedly would have kept us joyfully busy well in to our respective dotages...I will always remember Michael as my brother and a remarkable man.

With that in mind, I want to remind you of the luckiest breaks in the history of narrative therapy...in the late 1970s, Michael published a paper in the prestigious journal Family Process reporting on his work with the problem of anorexia at the Children's Hospital in Adelaide where he worked.  The advisory editor informed me some years ago that it was the first paper ever published showing positive results with the problem of anorexia.  Soon after that, the deputy director forbade Michael from meeting with families in which there was a young person diagnosed with anorexia because he was a social worker and was unfit for the task which should be restricted to more august medical and psychiatric practitioners.  Michael
refused to adhere to this edict and continued to meet with these families and they with him...the next step the deputy director took was to remove all the chairs from Michael’s room. Michael and the families merely continued, now sitting on the floor. Then the deputy director imposed on Michael what I gather he assumed would drive him into some other form of employment rather smartly...that from then on, he would be allowed only to meet with young people who had failed 2 year long psychoanalytic treatments for the problem of encopresis or in common parlance, soiling. This was truly dirty work. Little did the deputy director know he had challenged Michael in the same way Foucault must have been challenged by what he had witnessed in a public psychiatric institution. Here, Michael would be required to turn the tables on conventional psychiatric wisdom and in doing so invent externalizing conversations and in turn narrative therapy. I know Michael once told me he had a 99% success rate in an average of 4 meetings, so much so that he felt obliged, perhaps with his tongue in his literary cheek, to submit these results as having to do with pseudo-encopresis because if it was true encopresis, such claims to these results would have had to have been the ravings of a lunatic. Michael turned the problem of soiling into the object of everyone’s scrutiny and called into question the very cultural construction of a problem, something so taken for granted that at first this was met with disbelief in some quarters, great relief in others. Michael allowed his work and their outcomes to form the critique of that which he so opposed-the turning of people into problems and by doing so, to degrade them, to look down on them and finally to dismiss them.

In his work at Glenside, a state psychiatric hospital where he worked for many years part-time, his team weighed the files of the candidates for their service. If the weighed 2 kilos or more, they welcomed them to their service, and he would always add, “but we would never read them.”

I believe what Michael most objected to and why he felt such a kinship with Foucault was the prevailing professional ways of seeing those who sought their help, the gaze. The feminist scholar, Marilyn Frye, refers to this as the 'arrogant eye', a gaze that takes the professional's own standpoint as central, their, opinions, desires and projects as the salient ones, their experience and understanding as what is the case. The arrogant eye, she writes, allows them to absorb the identities of others into their own. From the point of view of the arrogant eye, in so far as patients exist they exist for the professional. They are dismissed and degraded in the light of such an eye. Frye asserts that the loving eye knows the independence of the other. It is an eye of one who knows that to see the seen, one must consult something other than one's own will and interests. Under the loving eye, people who lay claim to certain kinds of knowledges aren't unauthorized or deligitimated because they are not regarded to be in a position to know. The loving eye confers social standing on those who have been dismissed and degraded by the arrogant eye. I have no doubt that Michael looked upon everyone with what Frye, referred to as- a loving eye--to fall under Michael's loving gaze you felt the utmost in respectworthiness, which was in absolute contrast to the blameworthiness of so many of the psychological and psychiatric gazes. Michael had an inimitable voice and quaint vocabulary that bent the English language at times almost to its breaking point. He could be said to have willingly misused language to create new language. There are so many of his linguistic inventions that haven't made the Oxford English Dictionary yet but they will. My favourite is 'knowledged'. I am sure we have all adopted some of these White-isms perhaps even without knowing it- to refresh our own thinking. It is through his poetic vocabularies that you most easily appreciate both the novelty and subtlety of his thought and his intention to
Michael's loving eye had a tongue that constantly misused language without which according to the philosopher Feyerabend, 'there can be no discovery'. Michael certainly had more than his fair share of discoveries. At times, the eccentric ways he put this thoughts into words seemed so incandescent compared to how opaque many of his sources were. He illuminated ideas and the light that was reflected back allowed many of us to go where we might otherwise have found it hard going. To see how Michael's mind, which was as unrelenting as rust, worked, I know I would watch for the slight shifts in his vocabulary which told me what I was seeking. Michael would often say to me- 'why are you here? You know all this? You have heard it before!' I would reply: "every time you say it differently and that is what I am interested in hearing". But more in general, Michael illuminated and cleared a swath in the 'fields' of social work, psychology, psychiatry, etc. for many of us to ply our avocations. If I have been told by hundreds that 'if it wasn't for narrative therapy, I would have had to leave my profession for other kind of work', Michael must have heard this so many more times than I did.

Michael was inspirational in this regard, but never appealing to sentimental sermonizing on the one hand or the polemical on the other. He inspired by his practice, which was an alternative to that which he was critiquing, and, as such, his critiques were always unassuming in their manner. They were never empty or uninformed. He demanded of himself that he should offer clear plans of what is to be done and how to do it.

There is so much to say about and thank Michael for and this is a feeble attempt.

I was teaching in Bogotá, Colombia when I received the news that Michael had perished. I persisted with this dedicating the teaching as a tribute to Michael. On my last of the 4 days, Mariana Selas, waiting until everyone else had left, approached me and told me how desperately sad she was about Michael's death and began to sob inconsolably, asking what could she do on his behalf? I asked her- Did you meet Michael when he taught here in Bogotá 6 years ago? No, she replied. “Have you read his books?” “No”, she replied. I was running out of options here but went on to ask- “did you or are you studying him in your training?” “No”, she replied. “How did you know him?” I finally asked....She replied “through your stories about him.” I had never thought of that as I had never considered I would be telling stories about Michael. But now I am and so can you. This assists all of us to keep Michael well and truly alive in our lives and in our work in the same way he was so alive in his life and his work.

I wanted to end this by a song. This song was written and sung by Margarita Boom from Mexico. She did so at my request when the Cuban Psychiatric Association and Cuban Social Work Association to introduce NT to Cuba invited Narrative Therapy. We refused to comply unless they would, in turn, introduce us to what they chose to refer to as ‘Cuban social programs’. This conference, sponsored by the World Psychiatric Association and the international federation of social work, entitled 'The Spirit of Community: Narrative Therapy and Cuban Social Programs' was held in early January, 2007. Margarita's song speaks to how we hoped to meet them and embodies for me the 'spirit' of Narrative Therapy- that 'loving eye' I referred to by which Michael looked to those he met through the course of his work and his life.
Hermano Del Sol Y Tiempo
by Margarita Boom

deja que estreche tu historia
y se llenen mis manos
de nuevos sentidos,
que nunca habia visto,
que nunca habia sido,
que no habi podido
entender sin tu trino,
que tienen tu nombre
que traza un camino.

deja que lleve conmigo
un pedazo de tiempo
compartido
y el sabor a tibieza
que deja el amigo.

hermano de sol y tiempo
que importa el color del viento!
nos une un sabor a sueno.

a mano con mano
ir sosteniendo
un pedazo,
un cachito de mundo donde se permita
andar a tu paso,
sentir lo que sientes,
y aunque diferente,
cantar con tu canto.

dej que tome tu conciencia
y me lleve de vuelta
la certeza
que siendo distintos,
somos parecidos

que el corazon late
los mismos latidos,
pero que tu forma
inventa otro ritmo
dea que aprenda tu musica
y enriquezca mi mundo
con tu mirada
y tenga en tu alma
una nueva morada.

hermano el sol y tiempo
que importa el color del viento!
nos une un sabor a sueno.

Brother of the Sun and of Time
by Margarita Boom

let me hold your story
and fill my hands
with new sensations
that i've never seen before
which have never existed
which i couldn't have understood
without your song
they bear your name
and trace out a road.

let me take with me
a piece of our
time together
and savour the warmth
a friend leaves behind.

brother of the sun and of time
who cares what colour the wind is?
we are joined by the taste of a dream.

of being hand in hand
holding
a small piece,
a bit of a world where you are allowed
to walk at your own pace
to feel what you feel
and, although different,
to sing your own song.

let me take your conscience
and leave taking with me
the certainty
that although we are different
we're alike

that the heart beats
to the same beat
but your form
creates a new rhythm
let me learn your music
and enrich my world
with the look of your eyes
and to find in your soul
a new home.

brother of the sun and of time
who cares what colour the wind is?
we are joined by the taste of a dream.
THE LANGUAGE OF IMAGERY:
Psychotherapy Lessons from the Vision Journey Paintings

Jane Zich, M.F.A., Ph.D.

One of my most important teachers, profoundly influencing my life as an artist and psychotherapist, first appeared twenty years ago as a numinous image of a midnight blue panther (Zich, 2005). This encounter precipitated a fundamental shift in my understanding of myself and of the world around me. Five years ago, panther images reappeared in my dreams and waking thoughts with fresh and disruptive insistence. So I began posing a question to this energy: “What do you want from me?”

Vision Journey, a series of over 250 paintings, followed. The Vision Journey paintings emerged through a sort of active imagination, a process written about extensively by Jung (Chodorow, 1997) and others (Hannah, 1981; von Franz, 1980), in which unconscious energies and my consciousness engaged in a prolonged dialogue of imagery that traversed painting sessions, dreams, and waking visions, sometimes with explicit instructions from the dream images on how to proceed in the painting dialogue.

This instructive aspect of the unconscious is an example of what we, as psychotherapists, encounter repeatedly in our practices: images from the unconscious are capable of communicating to ego consciousness the shifts that must be made in order to grow, break through impasses, heal from traumas, or sustain and benefit from a prolonged encounter with the unconscious, whether that encounter is predominantly for therapeutic or for creative purposes. Imagery is a vital component of the “talking cure.” As psychologists, we rely on imagery for everything from dream analysis and active imagination to covert desensitization and visualizations designed to reduce stress and promote a sense of well-being.
Recently, Kazdin (2008), lamenting the gap between clinical research and clinical practice, proposed ways clinicians might spur clinically meaningful research through dissemination of their clinical observations that might subsequently be researched. In particular, he emphasized the importance of process-oriented explorations to infuse vitality into clinical research. Given the power of imagery to effect change in perceptions of self and others, feeling states, attitudes and expectations, as well as behaviors, it seems highly valuable for clinicians and researchers alike to pay attention to the language of imagery. Within this context, I wish to highlight three lessons I have learned from the Vision Journey painting process which seem to me to have potent relevance in psychotherapy: (1) a symbolic image is dynamic — it changes shape rather than holding to a fixed form, (2) certain types of imagery point to specific tasks for ego consciousness, and (3) “orienting intentions” (Zich, 2008b) may help the ego keep its bearings and navigate a safe course when it is engaged with imagery from the disturbingly unfamiliar realm of the unconscious.

**Shape-Shifting Imagery**

Although a midnight blue panther was the initial image that triggered the Vision Journey painting series, the instructive energy behind that image subsequently shifted into other forms, such as a shaman, Diana’s hounds, a blue tree. The four paintings presented in this paper are examples of that shape-shifting, since they do not include the literal image of a panther even though they all seemed to arise from what I experienced as “Panther” energy.

A living symbol, like any life form, continually shifts its shape. A lack of shifting may, in fact, suggest an impasse, or an area that is psychologically stuck, such as in a statically repetitive trauma-based dream that becomes less fixed and more dynamic as the trauma is worked through. Fixity in an image may suggest that it is operating more as a signal or sign than as a true symbol (Schaverien, 2005). Truly symbolic dreams, for instance, may be remembered differently from year to year not just because of defenses or memory distortions but also because the dream remains alive and evolving in the psyche, rather than being a static object that is chronologically confined to an event in the past.
Types and Stages of Imagery
Certain types of imagery may also inform us about the stage of the dialogue process with the unconscious. For instance, several types of images that repeatedly guided the Vision Journey process included Arrival images, Gatekeeper images, Engagement images, and Transformation images.

In the Arrival stage, images from the unconscious are apt to appear like newcomers to the scene. The task of the ego during this stage seems to be nothing more than to notice the new arrivals.

Example of an Arrival image
(Lion’s Drum © 2006 Jane Zich)
In the **Gatekeeper stage**, the images may also seem like newcomers, but they come with a salient sense of threat and challenge to the ego, as if to say, “Dare you make our acquaintance?” The tasks of the ego at this stage of imagery seem to be to assess its readiness to engage with the unconscious and to determine what is necessary to feel safe enough to undertake that engagement (Zich, 2007).

Example of a Gatekeeper image
*(Guardian at the Gate © 2005 Jane Zich)*
In the **Engagement stage**, imagery reflects the relatedness that is active between the ego and the unconscious during the dialogue. The task of the ego during this stage seems to be a mixture of both listening and speaking, of both being student and taking responsibility for the tasks of psychological development.

Example of an Engagement image

(*The Apprentice © 2006 Jane Zich*)
In the **Transformation stage**, images come with a sense of transcendent awakening. Rather than witnessing the image as a newcomer apart from the ego, however, the experience is simultaneously within and around ego consciousness. There is a sense of completion and wholeness. The task of the ego seems to be to assimilate this new awareness.

Example of a Transformation image

*The Music of Healing © 2006 Jane Zich*
This sequential quaternary of image stages comprises what I call the Phoenix Cycle (Zich, 2008a) because the repetitive sequence often accompanies the psyche through birth-death-rebirth cycles of fiery flights into the heights, and ashen falls into the depths, of the unconscious. Awareness of the Phoenix Cycle has been especially useful in helping me identify where patients may be stuck psychologically and what task their ego consciousness seems to be avoiding or overlooking, thereby contributing to the impasse. Increased awareness of the warded off task often facilitates re-engagement in the dialogue process with the unconscious in meaningful and constructive ways. For instance, when a patient is inundated with threatening gatekeeper imagery, clarifying what the patient needs in order to feel safe enough to engage with the unconscious energy may open up new possibilities for active dialogue rather than remaining in a passive sense of being victimized by frightening material from the unconscious.

I might note that Phoenix Cycle stages of imagery and the corresponding tasks demanded of consciousness may be applicable to cultural consciousness as well as to personal consciousness. The predominant type of imagery active in our surroundings might suggest stages we are at in our development as a culture or society, and possibly help identify impasses on this collective level. This possibility would be in keeping with the emerging literature on cultural complexes (Singer & Kimbles, 2004).

**Navigational Tools**

Throughout these four types and stages of imagery, one of the crucial navigational tools that aided the *Vision Journey* painting process has been “orienting intentions.” Orienting intentions help ego consciousness stay on the double track of being both open-minded and proactive during dialogues with the unconscious. Orienting intentions are process-oriented, not outcome-oriented. They include such intentions as a mindful effort to “treat energy from the unconscious as a dialogue partner,” or to “stay attentive to the pacing needs of ego consciousness,” or to “engage in dialogue for the purpose of healing” (or of “fuller consciousness”). Such orienting intentions can help ego consciousness find a transformative balancing point between states of merger and of alienation in its relationship with the unconscious (Zich, 2008b).
Bibliography


Jane Zich, M.F.A., Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and an award-winning artist who explores the use of imagery in psychotherapy, personal growth, and the creative process. She is Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, and has psychotherapy practices in Kentfield and San Francisco.

For additional information contact Dr. Zich at 415-752-8022.
SHRINK RAP ON FILM: WHO THE #$&% IS JACKSON POLLOCK?
Sue Hulley, Ph.D.

How quickly things change! I thought we were living in the golden age of the documentary, but an article in the Chronicle today that said that our current economic downturn is drying up the funding sources for these pics. Well, quick, before they stop coming, let's enjoy as many of these amazing movies as we can. Has anybody seen the one about the doctor who gave up his conventional lifestyle, lived in his trailer, and turned surfer, following the latest wave along with his 9 kids? I haven't seen it yet, but am watching my local listings.

The one I actually did see and want you to know about has to do with a lady trucker, Terri Horton, who bought a painting at a thrift store for $5 that might turn out to be a Jackson Pollock.

This movie is a "poster boy" for all the reasons I love these movies. For me, they combine features of the shaggy dog story and the nursery rhyme "for lack of a nail, ...the battle was lost." They often start innocently enough, with somebody saying he will eat at McDonald's for a month, for example, but by the time the movie is over, you feel that you almost understand the fall of Western civilization (and/or you're wondering whether Morgan Spurlock will get out of Big Macland alive!) What I especially like is that, unlike my experience with mainstream "fiction" movies, I can't predict where we are going.

In Pollock (unless you want me to call it Who the #$%%), we are ostensibly just keeping up with Terri as she tries to sell her painting. However, we are quickly confronted with the culture of the art dealer world when Terri can't get a single one to return her calls -many, many calls. We learn that this is because her painting doesn't have a "provenance," or paper trail tracing its prior ownership. Seems that a provenance provides reassurance -- AKA a legal fig leaf-to dealers. Given that Terri bought the thing at a now defunct thrift store whose owner had disappeared, provenance was not a possibility. Without it, not one of them would touch her painting, hence no return calls.

After months of these rejections, Terri started thinking "outside the box" in terms of authenticating her "Pollock." She came across a forensic expert, Peter Paul Viro, who had worked with several national and international museums. Using the scientific means of proof at his disposal, including a visit to Pollock's studio, he concluded that her painting was the real McCoy.

However, the art dealers were unfazed, because they don't trust forensic evidence. One of them interviewed commented that the art world is not a court of law, they are different. Well, yes, but you can't help but wonder what would have happened if someone had brought a lawsuit on this issue. You could readily envision Viro testifying as to his results, which, to me anyway, sounded pretty darned conclusive. As in a typical legal proceeding, it's pretty much a matter of finding enough circumstantial evidence for one scenario (in this case, Pollock created it) to make it hard to imagine the competing scenario (he didn't). Once you've heard all of the evidence, creation by Pollock seems (to me anyway) beyond a reasonable doubt: a pretty high forensic standard.

However, it becomes clear the farther we go in this film that we are looking at an interaction between two cultures, one of which rejects what the other sees as proof. It seems also as if the art dealers are rejecting a possible solution to a problem they are facing. An article in the Innovator Issue (May 12th) of the New Yorker called "In the Air," by Malcolm Gladwell which I had just read describes a similar
situation. He is talking about a bunch of really bright men brought together by Nathan Myhrvold to come up with new ideas/inventions (they call themselves the Intellectual Ventures Co). This may sound unrelated, but bear with me-this dog is definitely shaggy!

One of the men, Wood, is a physicist by day, but reads medical journals for fun. He got some ideas about how to solve problems in the cancer field. Wood commented that the traditions of medicine don't encourage people in that field to do arithmetic, whereas physicists measure things and compare measurements, leading them to have some insights which doctors lack. However, as Myhrvold commented, the only time a physicist and a brain surgeon meet is when the physicist is about to be cut open. In this case, however, Myhrvold and his crew actually met with surgeons to see if they could invent things which would help them.

Myhrvold asked the surgeons, “what, in a perfect world, would make your lives easier?” They said that they wanted an X-ray that went only skin deep. When the Intellectual Ventures crew heard that, their response was amazement. “That's your dream? A subcutaneous X-ray? We can do that.”

Two cultures were able to talk together and the Intellectual Ventures crew was potentially able to help. I wondered why this didn't happen for Terri. One thought I had—see what you think when you see the movie—is that the surgeons felt they had a problem and wanted it solved, while the art dealers didn't feel that way. That is, insofar as they felt they had a problem, they saw it as Terri's not just going away. They had, as my partner Bill says, "made up their minds and didn't want to be confused by facts."

This attitude was illustrated when Terri took the painting to a group which represented the art world's seal of approval. The group looked the work over and decided that it was not a Pollock. Why? Because it had no provenance! In other words, the same old same old. Plus, no one would sign their name to this! So the message is, "We know how to judge things, and we don't even have to tell you who ‘WE’ are!"

Another thing I love about characters that abound in documentaries: quirky real live people. I don't need "Little Miss Sunshine" where, from my point of view, some writers get together and create quirkiness. Give me real people— weirder and more interesting by far! There's Terri, her long lost son, her trucker buddies, the art dealers, the forensic guy, the fallen art dealer, etc., etc.

If all of this doesn't grab you, there's the class angle. Terri is holding out for recognition, a stance which for her is inextricably intertwined with class—those art dealers pretty much called her "stupid" because she hadn't been to college and didn't know all those words like "provenance." Terri is a stubborn person, not atypical in a trucker, and she doesn't like being put down. She's now been at this for about ten years, and the fat lady hasn't sung yet.

In fact, we are informed in the closing credits that the forensic expert has gotten even more proof of the painting's authenticity. I'm not going to ruin the movie by disclosing any more, although I can tell you that everyone who reviewed it for the Rotten Tomatoes website liked it. The Village Voice critic, Jessica Grose, will have the last word here, "The most arresting piece of the film is Horton herself, as she asks who the hell they think they are (the art dealers)". Check it out.
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Dr. Lank holds an MFT degree and a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. She has two decades of direct clinical service specializing in addiction medicine, substance related disorders, eating disorders and co-existing psychiatric disorders in residential and outpatient treatment settings. Dr. Lank currently serves as President of the Board of Directors for the National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Addictions (NCADA-Bay Area) in San Francisco, CA. She is a Certified Sex Addiction Therapist (CSAT) candidate with the International Institute for Trauma and Addiction Professionals. She is a program and treatment consultant and provides substance abuse/sex addiction assessment individual, couple, group and family psychotherapy in private practice in San Rafael.

**Date:** Saturday, September 20, 2008  
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**Location:** Best Western Corte Madera Inn  
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